

S O M E  
Necessary & Seasonable  
Cases of  
CONSCIENCE

About  
Things Indifferent in  
Matters of Religion,  
Briefly, yet faithfully stated  
and resolved : wherein the  
just bounds of *Imposing* on  
one hand, and of *Obe-*  
*ying* on the other, are  
truly Fixed,

---

By an Indifferent Hand.

Rom. 14. 19. Let us therefore follow  
after the things that make for  
peace, and things wherewith one  
may edifie another.

Bernard. *Pacem contemnentes &  
Gloriam quarentes, pacem per-*  
*dunt & gloriam.*

---

London, Printed for Thomas Dring,  
and are to be sold at the Sign of the  
George in Fleet-street, and the  
first Shop in Westminster-Hall.





"Y<sup>th</sup> Author is supposed to be a heretic  
"good, one y<sup>e</sup> once was as right as an  
"Independent in y<sup>e</sup> point of Admission  
"to y<sup>e</sup> L<sup>th</sup>. Supper, and therefore boldly  
"quarrelled his /cane, But now is turned  
"E'pall, and is a right Reverend Deane."

The above is a heretic in a copy of this book  
in the Pistorius library, at Siston Court.

Gloucestershire

A

By Francis Fulwood.  
Arch deacon of Tithers. -

S O M E  
Necessary & Seasonable  
Cases of  
CONSCIENCE

About  
Things *Indifferent* in  
Matters of *Religion*,  
*Briefly*, yet *faithfully* stated  
and resolved : wherein the  
just bounds of *Imposing* on  
one hand, and of *Obe-*  
*ying* on the other, are  
truly *Fixed*,

---

By an *Indifferent* Hand.

Rom. 14. 19. Let us therefore follow  
after the things that make for  
*peace*, and things wherewith one  
may edifie another.

Bernard. *Pacem contemnentes &  
Gloriam quarentes, pacem per-*  
*dunt & gloriam.*

---

London, Printed for Thomas Dring,  
and are to be sold at the Sign of the  
George in *Fleet-street*, and the  
first Shop in *Westminster-Hall*.

I 6 6 2.

1840

1841

1842

1843

1844

1845

1846

1847

1848

1849

1850

1851

1852

1853

1854

1855

1856

1857

1858

1859

1860



## The Preface.

*Am. Res. Baldwin, Nov. 11, 1844*  
SAd experience in every Age, especially in ours, hath taught us, that the *Interested Wits* of men, on every side, having found so much to be said for their *own* opinions, and against anothers, have widened *differences* to so vast a *distance*, that the *Wit of man* may even despair of a perfect *closure*. Indeed, the *Wisdom* from above,

A 3 that

## The Preface.

that is pure and peace-able, and the Grace of Self-denial and Brotherly love can onely do it.

Yer, methinks, where there are *two great Bodies* divided and engaged in a Church or Kingdome, even *Moral wisdom* should foresee the evil, and make timely Application of preventing Remedies,

For which, there seem but *three waies* open to us : *Conversion* or *Subversion* of one of the parties, or a *Concession* of both. The first

## The Preface.

first is hardly to be *expected* ; the second is not to be *desired* ; but, how happy were *England*, if the last were *obtained* !

But yet I humbly crave leave to distinguish, betwixt *that* Cause & Party which the *Law* owneth, and *that* which it doth not ; neither, do I ask such a *Concession* from the present *Law*, as would maintain and uphold *both* these *parties*, as they are *parties* ; only, this I apprehend as a thing desireable, that

A 4 the

## The Preface.

the way might be made so fair, or at least (considering the *Temptation*) passable, that the *dissenting* party might come over to the *other*, and remaine no longer a *distinct body* from it. So that the *persons* that uphold that which is called the *illegal party*, or at least the *main body* of them (for *some* will be *unreasonable*) might be *preserved*, though the *party* be lost; and upon a *fair* compliance, and as it were, *adding* or *adjoining* themselves to the *Church*,  
may



## The Preface.

may be united and embodied with it, and have the *same* protection and kindness of the *Law*.

If *one* of the *parties* should be contented thus to *sacrifice* it self to the *peace* of the Church, and the *honor* of the other; it is pity, but that the *surviving* partie, that enjoys the *Inheritance*, should cover the *nakedness* of its *Judaicam* Brother deceased; and, *synagogam* as *St Augustine* speaks *cum honore* of the *Jewish* Church, *fuisse sepe-* *liendam.* allow him a handsome and *honorable* *Burial*.

Herein, I humbly

A 5 con-

## The Preface.

conceive, consists the *INTEREST* of the Church of *England*; which also I have made my designe and labour in this small Treatise, by making the *Rule of Imposition* as low and narrow, and the *Rule of Obedience* as high and large as the *Scriptures*, the measure of both, would allow me:

And 'tis happy that *Our Interest* is also *our Duty*; for, if, on the one side, nothing be *required*, but what is *expedient* in its due latitude; and on the other,

## The Preface.

ther, nothing be refused that is not *unlawfull* according to *Scripture*, doubtless the way of *Peace* would not be so much unknown unto us.

I do much Revere that grave saying of *Seneca*; *Non expedit concutere felicem Statum*; it is not safe to shake a happy State: yet, by the same line of reason we are all led to use the best of our *Counsels* for the settlement of the State, and making it happy.

The Sentence of St

*Aug.*

## The Preface.

*Augustine* is also weighty; *Ipsa mutatio Consuetudinis, etiam quæ adjuvat utilitate, novitate perturbat*, the very change of a Custom may sometimes spoil any other good that may accrue by it, even by its *Novelty*; but, I think, none will affirm the Rule to be *universal*, and to extend to all Customs, and to all seasons and exigents of the Church; and if that be acknowledged, what remains, but that the *conveniences* and *inconveniences* of some small

## The Preface.

Small alterations for the gaining of some, yea many brethren, and the establishment of the Church in quietness, be equally considered, and then the conclusion be made and not before?

I acknowledge, there is much of *Wisdom*, much of *Peace* in that notable *Adage*; *Malum bene positum non est movendum*, an Evil that is onely so, because *inconvenient*, being placed well, is not to be removed; lest by plucking out a *Rusty nail*

## The Preface.

*na*il the whole Fabrick  
fall about your ears :  
yet its possible , a *ma-*  
*lum*, a little *inconveni-*  
*ence* ill placed may be  
the cause of a great  
*mischief*, as the smallest  
errour in a curious  
*Watch* may happen to  
check the whole *Mo-*  
*tion*:

Yet, I am absolutely  
averse from that anti-  
ent Petition, *Tolle Le-*  
*gem & fiet certamen*,  
take away the Law and  
we will dispute : that  
were, indeed, to begin  
*in confusion*, and most  
likely to end in *devour-*  
*ing*.

## *The Preface.*

*ing and consuming one another : but, I humbly offer , Whether something of the Rigour of Law might not be abated , or some smal matters un-injoin-ed ; not, that we might fight, but that we might agree, and rejoyce together as the sons of Peace, in Sions prosperity. I mean, not in two distinct bodies, and parties in the Church ; but, thus united, and of two made one ; that under one and the same Prince and Law ; one and the same Ecclesiastical*

## The Preface.

*stical Government*; professing one and the same *Doctrin*e and *Liturgy*, we might all as one man jointly prosecute one and the same glorious *ends*, the defence of the *Gospel*, and the saving of *Souls*.

But it may not be *unseasonable*, to put the Case, that the *Supream* Authority will not admit of *any alteration* of that which is already *established by Law*, or at least not so much as is desired: if it should be so, I humbly crave leave to offer my Advice



## The Preface.

vice to my Reverend Brethren in the *Ministry*, in a few words, and I have done.

I. That, as they fear the God of heaven, and love the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and have any bowels of compassion towards this poor people ; and as they would obtain the *ends* of their *Calling*, and advance the *peace* and settlement, the *safety* and *salvation* of the Church of God committed to their charge, and of which they must one day give an *account*,

## *The Preface.*

*count, that they would instantly (seeing their contests and heats of Altercation may sooner enflame the Nation, then alter the Lawes, when once established) that they would instantly throw away their envyings, hatred, malice, and variance, their evil surmising and animosities, their evil speaking and reproaching one another, and fall heartily to their great business, the Work of the Gospell, abounding therein with love and peace one towards*

## The Preface.

wards another, and  
amidst their people;  
that the *God of Love*  
and *Peace* may be with  
them, and bless their  
endeavours, for the  
*common* salvation; for  
why should it be said  
to their *eternal obloquie*,  
That the Church of  
*England* was destroyed  
by the *Builders*, or  
*died* of the *Doctors*?

My Dear Brethren,  
let me breathe out my  
soul in *St Augustines*  
words : *Ut moncor, ut*  
*doleo, ut timeo; procede-*  
*rem ad pedes vestros,*  
*flerem quantum vale-*  
*rem;*

## The Preface.

*rem, rogarem quantum  
amarem; nunc unum-  
quemque pro seipso, nunc  
utrumque pro altero; &  
pro aliis, & maximè in-  
firmis, pro quibus Chri-  
stus mortuus est, qui vos  
tanquam in Theatro vi-  
te hujus cum magno sui  
periculo spectant; ne de  
vobis ea conscribendo  
spargatis, quæ quandoq;  
concordantes delere non  
poteritis, qui nunc con-  
cordare nolitis.*

2. To my dissenting  
Brethren, my humble  
and solemn Request is,  
That if the case be like  
to be thus, they would  
in

## The Preface.

in season think it advise-  
able, *seriously* to confi-  
der *what they have to*  
*do*; to study that which  
is likely to be enjoyn-  
ed, with *all severity* and  
impartiality, as they  
would *do* or *suffer* with  
knowledge and com-  
fort:

The great Case will  
be, *Upon what grounds*  
*you may warrantably lay*  
*down your Ministry*;  
and, upon what, *Not* ?  
or how farr you may  
*lawfully obey* the Im-  
position of **Authority** ?  
For your more ample  
satisfaction herein, give  
me

## The Preface.

me leave to say, That after the Scriptures, *Bucer, Calvin, Melan-ethon, Zanchy, Polanus, Beza, &c.* are of undoubted credit in such a case as this, and worthy to be conferred with ; as also *St Augustine* his 118, 119. *Epist. ad Fann.*

If this poor Piece shall have the honour of your perusal, I beseech you remember, that by two Errors we are very apt to weigh things amiss :

1. When we take up the scales & weigh over-hastily.

2. When

## *The Preface.*

2. When one end of the *ballance* is heavier then the other; perhaps by prejudice, or something else that should not be there.

Do the *Book* no wrong, do the *Church* no wrong, do *your selves* no wrong.

For your own *preservation*, your peoples *edification*, the *Churches* peace, prosperity and *salvation*, be not averse to any *just satisfaction*.

Let no *Society*, no *Condition*, no *Temptation*, with *error* and *suffering*

## The Preface.

*Suffering* be more dear  
and pleasant with you  
then the *Church* of  
God, the discharge of  
your *Trust*, the fulfil-  
ling of your *Ministry*,  
with *duty* and *liberty*,  
*truth* and *felicity*.

Farewell.

---







*Twenty Four Necessary and Seasonable*  
**CASES of CON-**  
**SCIENCE,** *about*  
*things Indifferent in*  
*Masters of Religion.*

---

CASE I.

---

*What are things In-*  
*different?*

Resol.

**T**HINGS *Indiffe-*  
*rent* have their place  
 in the *middle*, betwixt  
 things *Necessary* and things  
*Sinful*; things that ought,  
                   B                  and

and things that ought not to be done : For as to their Simple and common *Nature*, i. e. Considered nakedly without respect to such *Circumstances* as change their property, and *denominate* them good or evil ; they are such things as may be done or left undone *without sin*.

*Medium  
abnegati-  
onis.*

They are of a Middle, not a Mixt *Nature*, not both good and bad ; that is a *Contradiction* ; not partly good and partly bad ; then the good can never expiate the bad ; (for the least degree of evil renders the Action evil :) but neither good nor bad.

As they are *Morally* neither good nor bad ; so, they are not made such by *Scripture*,

*about things Indifferent.*

3

*Scripture* , being neither commanded nor forbidden.

They are of an Indifferent *Nature*, and may be Indifferently *Used* : Yet very apt, by reason of *Circumstances* to tend unto, to swerve towards, to *become* or *appear*, either good or evil.

---

## CASE II.

*Whether there is any thing Indifferent in the Exercise of Religion?*

Resol.

**F**OR Our clearer satisfaction herein, let us consider *Actions* and *Circumstances*.

B 2 1. Touch-

## Cases of Conscience

1. Touching Actions, I assert : First, That no one *action* in religious exercises is of its own nature so Indifferent, but that by its circumstances it easily becomes good or evil.

2. No *Action*, that is *deliberate*, and hath an order to a certain end ( distinguished from Actions of *fancy*, usually so called, which are unobserved by the *Agents* ) *Individually* considered, and as *performed* about the Worship of God, can be truly Indifferent ; but by reason of its circumstances is good or evil.

3 No Action, considered as a part of *Divine Worship*; can possibly be Indifferent ; for either it is  
such

such as God himself hath appointed, and therefore necessary; or invented by men, and superstitious.

4. Yet Fourthly, There are divers Actions that are no part, but *circumstances* of Worship (though Actions in themselves) before they are *exerted* and clothed with their circumstances that are properly Indifferent, both as to their *Nature*, neither good nor bad, as to the *Scripture*, neither commanded or forbidden; and consequently : as to our *use* neither necessary nor unlawful : and lastly ; in *comparison* with other Actions, that might as lawfully serve in the same stead, of neither more or less necessity : as I might

instance in lifting up, or casting down our eyes, in lifting up or spreading abroad our hands in *Prayer*, &c. But thus much for Actions.

2. As for *Circumstances* properly so called, It is not doubted, I think, by any, but there are some, viz. *time, place, habit*, that are purely indifferent: I mean, before they are *determined*, and in a general consideration, abstracted from *conveniency*, and not complicated with other accidents that may vary the Case.

I shall not burden this unexceptionable Point with needless Authority, which were very *easy*, if not needless. I shall only

ly instance the reasonable-  
ness of it, under one part  
of Divine Worship, viz.  
the Sacrament, in the judg-  
ment of Mr. Calvin: So  
much (saith he) as concerns  
the outward forme of Mini-  
string the Sacrament, viz.  
Whether the faithful receive  
it into their hand, or not.  
Whether they divide it, or  
every one eat that which is  
given him: Whether they  
put the Cup into the hand of  
the Deacon, or deliver it to  
the hand of the next: Whe-  
ther the Bread be Leavened  
or unleavened: Whether the  
Wine be red or white; it  
maketh no matter; these  
things be Indifferent, and  
left to the liberty of the  
Church. Thus he: and we  
might adde almost so many

Calv. In Ri.  
lib. 1.  
S: & 43.

more of the like nature, about every other Ordinance, if occasion required.

---

### CASE III.

*Whether may things Indifferent be Imposed and required by Authority ?*

Resol.

**D**oubtless they may :  
For,

I. The *Word* of God hath not *particularly* taught us, what that *decency* and *order* is that is required : Yet the Ruling part of the Church ought not onely to require, but to *take care* and see (according to the *Apostles*



stles (example ) that all things be done *decently* and in order.

2. Then, plain Reason demonstrates, that if it be the duty of Rulers, to see That all things be done decently and in order ; they must also by their own discretion, or advice with others, judge and *prescribe* what is such.

3. The Great *Apostle*, therefore, took upon him, not onely to press the *general* command of decency and order ; but to reprove *particular* disorders, and to direct unto and command *particular* parts of order and comlineffe in the Churches.

1 Cor. 14.

34. & 11.

4. 17.

1 Tim. 2. 8,

9. 1 Tim.

2. 12.

1 Cor. 7. 10

4. Yea , that Famous *Synod*, and truly Apostoli-

call, in *Acts* 15. did by their power also limit the use of Indifferent things; which they concluded for the present necessary, Both to be *ordered* and to be observed, for the *Peace* of the Church.

5 And, that this power of *ordering* the Church in things *indifferent*, was not peculiar to the times of the *Apostles*, but resides in the Rulers of the Church, to be exerted upon the same *Moral* and reasonable occasions, might easily be made to appear to have the suffrage of the *Learned* of all Ages, if any need required.

6. *Ames* himself having ventured to say, *That nothing ought to be commanded*  
ed

ed but that which is good,  
 or forbidden but which is *Ames, Cas*  
 evil, seems presently to *de Adia-*  
 check, and so to limit, as *phoris.*  
 almost to recant what he  
 had said; adding, *Quod*  
*Adiaphorum est, non potest*  
*simpliciter, absolute, & in*  
*perpetuum, vel prohiberi vel*  
*imperari*; Whereby one  
 would think he yielded,  
 that, for some respects, and  
 for some time, things indif-  
 ferent in their own Nature  
 may be commanded or for-  
 bidden.

7. I shall conclude this  
 also with *Calvins* Authori-  
 ty; We know, (saith he)  
 that every Church is left *in 1 Cor.*  
 free to appoint a forme of po- *11. 21*  
 litie and Government fit and  
 profitable for it selfe, because  
 the Lord hath prescribed

no-

In Com.  
Loc.

nothing certain to whom we might adde the pertinent (if alike weighty) Testimony of *Philip Melancton*; who tells us, *That because the Ministry divinely ordained ought to be publique and external, there is need of some humane Ordinances.*

*Vid etiam Dana. Judic. &c.*

---

CASE

CASE IV.

*Whether may things Indifferent conduce any thing to the order and decency of Gods Worship ?*

Resol.

**T**Hings indifferent, absolutely so, or considered as such, cannot : For things indifferent, as such, do *equally respect* the order and disorder of the Church or service thereof, otherwise they were not *media* or indifferent things, but *partial*. So far true is that of Ames, *Those things which make for order in their own Nature are not indifferent.*

However,

However, there are *divers things* in their own common nature *indifferent*, that yet in *some respects* are of more expediency in the Worship of God than others : which happens, either from their better readiness and aptness for order, as *applied* ; or because they may have more *repute* or shew of goodness *reflected* from the *temper* of the *place* where they are used ; and consequently, are more *eligible* than those that approach to *vice* or superstition , or are blemish'd with *appearance* or *repute* of evil, or are *aliens* and unapt for the *present Service*.

Again, diverse *Accidents* that are *equally* indifferent in their nature, and left so by

by the Scriptures, may also be equally accommodated, so far as we may judge, for order and decency, and consequently both indifferent and expedient; for although they all of them be decent and comely enough, yet neither the worshippers nor the worship may be capable of admitting or using them all, at least at one and the same service.

Lastly, the *Custom* of the Churches is a standing *Rule* in these Matters, according to which that which is *decent* in one Church as well as lawful in it self, may be most *uncomely*, and consequently most *inexpedient* in *another*, which addes no little clear

cleerness to the demonstration, that things indifferent in themselves, may, as they are *applied*, conduce something; yea and very much, to the order and comeliness of Divine worship.

---

### CASE V.

*What are those things indifferent that are to be determined by the power of the Church?*

Resol.

**T**Hese things indifferent are apparently reducible to that *General Rule* of the Apostle, *Let all things be done decently and*

1 Cor. 14.  
ult.



*and in order : this Calvin calls that general conclusion which briefly takes in not only the whole state, but even all the particular parts of outward order : Yea, saith he, 'tis that Rule to which all things which respect external politie are to be reduced.*

1. The Ruling part of the Church hath power to set things **IN ORDER** in the Church of Christ ; [*The rest will I set in order when I come,*] which power may shew it self in three great Instances. The forming of a *Government*, of a *Liturgy*, and the ordering of the *Manner* of publick Worship.

1. I must (though with all respect and condescension

tion to any means of *Conviction* to the contrary) I must yet acknowledge, that I finde so little of the *form* and frame of *Church Government* delineated in *Scripture*, and so much encouragement for my present opinion in *judicious*, sober and learned Authors, that I am very apt to think that much of the *Modelling* of the Government of the Church is left by *God* to the *prudence*, and wisdom, and power of the Church.

I most readily subscribe, that there is a *Government* of the Church; that this Government is fixed in the *Officers* of the Church; that the *General Rules* of this Government are plain'y revealed in *Scripture*; yea, that

that there was *Episcopal Jurisdiction* (in the common acceptation of it) exercis'd by the *Apostles*, and *Timothy* and *Titus*, upon such common and *Moral Reason* as may bear it up, and commend its use to the end of the world.

Yet the *Frame*, *Fashion*, and special *subjects* of it are so *obscure* in Scripture, and so little entitl'd to it, that, methinks, even all of all *perswasions* amongst us are forced to *prudence* at last in the *practice*, though in their *Disputes* they fetch fire from Heaven *Jure Divino*.

Very many moderate *Episcopal Divines* are sufficiently known to content themselves with Saint *Hierom's*

rom's Basis of Episcopal Government, and to defend it only as a *prudential* and *occasional* ( though yet *Apostolical* ) Institution, *ad tollenda schismata*, whereon I think it may stand, as Mount Sion, and never be moved.

The *Presbyterians* if they well consider their *subordination* of *Classes* they must needs appeal to *Prudence* and *reason* for its defence, while they find this at least as much a stranger to the *Word of God*, as a *Subordination* of persons. Indeed this they *of late* seemed plainly to acknowledge, when upon the *same* grounds with their moderate brethren of the *Episcopal persuasion*, they conceded

*Concessions  
and De-  
sires.*

ceded to a *regulate Episcopacy*; desiring also at the hands of the King, that their *grand grievance* of too large *Diocesses* might be healed by *Suffragan Bishops*; which some think are not obscurely answered already in the jurisdiction of *Arch-Deacons*, at least, as to the assistance of the *Bishop*, and the satisfying the desires and complaints of our brethren aforesaid.

Yea, the very *Congregation* it self called *Independents* acknowledge their *devolving* the exercise of Government upon their *Elders* to be only for *Orders* sake, and their *Church-Covenant* to be only necessary for its ends; and at length their great *Champion*

on hath found no other Foundation for the whole *Fabrick* of Congregational Discipline, but *Mutual Confederacy* and *Prudential Agreement* among themselves.

2. The *second* thing attributed to the *Care* and power of the Church is the forming and establishing of a *publick Liturgy*.

Though we find not any such form in Scripture either imposed, framed or directed, yet the grounds and matter thereof are plainly there, and seen and acknowledged to be there well nigh by *all the Churches* of Christ in the world.

I do not find but that as the *Episcopal Divines* plead the *Necessity*, so most  
of

of the moderate Presbyterians allow the *lawfulness* and the *usefulness*, yea and the *Imposition* of forms of publick Prayers, of Administering the Sacraments, of Catechism, Confirmation, and of reading of the Scriptures; as also of reprehending offenders, &c. All which (as *Mart. Bucer* *vid. M. B. enumerates* them, and concludes) are reserved for the *reg. Christi.* care and power of the *6. 13.* Church

3. Thirdly, thereunto also belongs the Ordering and managing of the publick Worship, as to the *time, manner* and *parts* of it; when to *begin*, how to *proceed*, when to *end* in the ordinary course of Divine Service; as also to appoint  
*extra;*

extraordinary times of fasting and thanksgiving; all which, seeing Scripture hath left them to the *Churches liberty*, in reason they ought to be ruled and fixed by prudent *Authority*, as we would avoid Confusion and Ataxy in the Church of Christ.

2. Secondly, things serving to the *Comeliness* and Beauty of worship are also to be put to the same account; the decency of the *place* of Worship; the *gravity* of the *habite* of Ministers; the fitness of the *Vessels* for both Sacraments; the *kind* of bread and wine; the *places* and *gestures* of *Administration* and *Communion*, and such like, which the Scripture hath



hath taken no notice of,  
and yet all sober men are  
fully convinced, that very  
high and almost indispen-  
sable convenience exacts a  
settlement and prudent  
Regulation of them; and  
in all which, methinks,  
*Uniformity with Decency*  
should offend no body.

---

CASE. VI.

*Whether may the Ruling  
part of the Church impose  
upon the Church things in-  
different, quatenus Indif-  
ferent, or meerly because  
they are such?*

Resol.

**I** Humbly conceive they  
have no *such* power, no  
C such

such *Arbitrary* and strangely unlimited power, which, if exercised with any *extent*, is not likely to *edifie*, but to destroy the Church.

For.

1. If we should grant that the Governours of the Church have power to *impose* things as they are *indifferent*, or *because* they are indifferent, we grant they have power to impose *any thing* indifferent, and consequently *what* indifferent things they *please*, upon the Church : and thus we make the *Will of Men* the Principle and *Rule* of decency and order in the Service of God, and not the *Will of God*, or reason and *prudence* in the choice of things *fittest* according  
to

to his Word. Then they have power to clog *Gods Worship* with things altogether *incongruous* to it, provided they be indifferent in *general*, (as Dauncing, Bowling, &c.) and to render it instead of a *reasonable service*, absurd and *ridiculous*. Then may they add Ceremony upon Ceremony, until the *number* is so many, and the *weight* so great, that the work will be *burdensome*, and indeed intolerable to *God* and *Man*. Thus may they improve their *Dominion* over our *Faith*, untill they have worn out the *beauty* of holiness, the *power* of Devotion, and have rendred the *Christian Liberty* worse complain'd then the *Jewish* or *Popish Bondage* As *Aug.* C 2 This

*This Power, as God did never intrust them with it, so I never heard of that man, or sort of men, that pretended unto it, or to the exercise of it; every one in Authority still granting that there ought to be Reason for their Impositions, acting therein as Men, as well as Governors.*

And though many are too apt to give *Flattering Titles* to men in *Authority*, I have not met with any that write *highest* for *Conformity*, and obedience to Authority in things Indifferent, that allowed *such* a Power to men in Authority, to require what indifferent things they pleased, without any respects to the fitness and usefulness of

of

of them in the *Worship* of  
God.

For, as *Thomas Rogers*, Against  
(that notable Adversary to *Seffray* :  
*Non-conformity*) in this *Obj. 4.*  
Case said, *Authority* in ma-  
king *Laws* must alwaies re-  
spect the *Common Good*.  
And though *Church-Gov-*  
*ernors*, saith *Francis Ma-* Authority  
*son*, (of the same spirit of the  
with the former) may make *Church*,  
*Church-Laws*, yet they may *&c. p. 8, 9.*  
not establishe what they list.  
God hath inruited their  
*Authority* with certain  
bounds and limits, which  
they may not pass : Agree-  
ing with *Calvin*, who hath  
also taught us, That God  
hath not left us *effrenem li-*  
*centiam*, such an unbridled  
liberty ; *sed cancellos cir-*  
*cum dedit*, in *1 Cor. 14. ult.*

## CASE VII.

*What then doth render things indifferent fit to be imposed ?*

Resol.

**I**NDIFFERENT things though they be not commanded or forbidden *particularly*, but left undecided in *Scripture*, yet must they be *Reducible* to and *Agreeable* with some *general Rules in Scripture*, to make the Imposition of them *fit* or *warrantable*.

This Resolution becoms *Christianity*, neither can it be *inimicus* to *Christian Discipline* ; it hath the suffrage of *highest conformity*,  
which

which affords its liberty still to challenge great consideration in all impositions of things Indifferent. *Clapham*, an earnest and Learned Opposer of Non-Conformity, hath thus stated it: *Such things*, <sup>Chronol. Discourse</sup> *such* he, we say to be of an indifferent nature; as for the Church, <sup>of the</sup> doing or not doing thereof <sup>cap. 9.</sup> we have no express Word of God in particular, only by ~~some~~ general Rule we are led to use our Christian Reason. *Francis Mason* <sup>Authority</sup> also allows, That all (Ec- <sup>of the</sup> clesiastical) Canons must <sup>Church,</sup> be framed according to the <sup>P. 8. 9.</sup> general Canons of the holy Scripture. In a word, I never read a denial of it.

## CASE VIII.

*What are those general Rules of Scripture that limit the Imposition of things Indifferent?*

Resol.

*Syntag.  
Tom. 2.  
pag. 376.*

**P**olannus gives us a brief and sound, though a general satisfaction to this Case; Things indifferent (saith he) ought to be reduced to that general equity (which the Scriptures appoint to be the rule and measure of all our actions) the Glory of God, and the good of our Neighbour. *Quatenus ad Dei gloriam, & proximi salutem faciunt*

*Lex respicit ordinem ad bonum commune.*

*Aquinas.*



unt : or the Common good,  
as Rogers shortens it.

Marlorate doth more In 1 Cor.  
fully explicate himself, say- 14. ult.  
ing, that the *Apostle* con-  
firmeth his *Traditions* by  
the *Word of God*, Reason,  
Edification, the Example of  
*Churches*, Decency and  
Order ; and he adds, With  
which same Arguments  
we ought to examine our Ec-  
clesiastical Traditions.

But let us a little confi-  
der some more special  
Rules, as we easily finde  
them in the surface of the  
*Scripture*.

1. The first shall be that  
*Catholique Rule of Expe-*  
*diency*. All things (saith 1 Cor. 6.  
the *Apostle*) are Lawfull 12.  
for me ; but all things are  
not expedient. Some law-

C5

ful

*ful* things, it seems, are not *expedient*. Things not *expedient* to be *done*, ought not to be *done*; and things not *expedient* to be commanded, ought not to be commanded.

Thus there falls before us a *double lawfulness*; a thing may be *lawful* and *expedient*; a thing may be *lawful*, and not *expedient*; or a thing may be *lawful*, and yet we ought *not* to do it, because *not expedient*; and a thing may be *lawful*, and we ought to do it because *expedient*. And thus a thing may be *lawful* and not *lawful*.

More plainly, there is a *lawfulness* more remote from us, which is fixed in the *general* nature of the thing

thing ; this is meant in the first expression of the Apostle, *All things are lawful for me.* 2. There is a *lawfulness* that is more *immediate* and nearer to us, which dependeth *not* upon the *common* essence of the thing, but upon some *extrinsick* Circumstances, of *Time, Place, Occasion, &c.* whereby the thing is *fitted* to the present service ; this the Apostle means by *Expediency*, *All things are not expedient.*

Now where you speak of this *latter* lawfulness of *expediency*, the former, *viz.* of *Indifferency* is shut out : so that though in one sence, all things that are *indifferent* are *lawful*, yet in this latter sence, all things

things that are indifferent and *not expedient*, are *not lawfull*, but sinful. And it being against the *Rule* of the Apostle, and indeed against common *reason*; it is not warrantable for Church-Governors to impose any thing about Gods Worship, that is *only* indifferent and lawful in it self, but *not expedient*.

Thus that great Defender of our Church and the Ceremonies of it extends and limits her power; Church-Governors (saith he) *have liberty to establish whatsoever being in it self indifferent shall to their Wisdom seem most expedient*.

Authority  
of the  
Church,  
p. 13.

2. The *second* special Rule is the *publique Peace*.  
God

God is the God of Peace and Order ; of Peace as well as Order ; and as the Order, so the Peace of the Church, without which there is no Order, is precious with him, and with all that have the Spirit of God, and any care of his Church.

Should any thing give way to Peace, and should not things Indifferent ? are not these Indifferent ? is not Peace necessary ? is it not necessary by command ? Yea, it is necessary as a means ; as a means of preventing our fears, of obtaining our hopes, our hopes of settlement, our hopes of unity, our hopes of plenty, of prosperity and glory in Church and State.

Who

Who can think it *wisdom* (without some other greater *inconvenience* urge to it) to *force* any thing that is *but indifferent*, to the endangering so necessary a thing as *Peace*, or the *dividing* the Church of God, or *provoking* any considerable part thereof to *separate* from us? Let us rather with the *Apostolical Synod*, weigh the *present necessity* in this regard; and as the Apostle exhorts in the like Case, *Follow the things that make for Peace*, Rom. 14. 19.

3. The *third* special Rule in *Scripture* is, the *offence of weak brethren*, who though weak are not to be thrown to the walls without any regard.

Yea.

Yea, the *Scripture* rea-*Vid. Romi*  
sons us to a greater tender-<sup>14.</sup>  
ness to the weaker part of <sup>1 Gor. 7,</sup>  
the Church ; and more <sup>9, 10. cap.</sup>  
care of that : and in this  
very case hath given us di-  
vers and weighty Consi-  
derations, that we wilfully  
offend not our weak Bre-  
thren by the use of our li-  
berty in things indifferent.

Indeed, when things  
indifferent are once com-  
manded, the case is alre-  
red, as to private Chritti-  
ans, (as at large hereafter)  
but otherwise, where the  
reason of the Apostles  
Example and Commands  
is found, the obligation of  
both will hardly be esca-  
ped.

As Polanus saith, That <sup>Syntag:  
rom.2.</sup>  
Ceremonies may be observed p. 376.  
for

for peace sake, and the avoiding of the offence of the weak: so, I humbly conceive, that the rigor of imposition may be warrantably abated for the same causes.

Against  
Seffray.  
Object 4.

Mr Rogers is more peremptory (though, as I noted before, a sufficient Defender of Ceremonies) He that in *things indifferent* (meaning before they are commanded) hath not a tender care of weak Christians in his doing, sheweth, that there is not that charity in him, nor regard of his brethren, which God requireth.

Upon this ground, no doubt, the Learned Doctor Gardner stood, when he said, *If the Laws in these cases,*



about things Indifferent.

41

cases, viz. of Ceremonies had not been already made, I should never for my own part wish to have them made. Dialogue about Ceremonies.

Neither can we refer to any other Topick the care and pains that Queen Elizabeth and King James used for the just satisfaction of Non-conformists in the ages before us : To the weak, became I as weak, <sup>1 Cor. 9.</sup> that I might gain the weak, <sup>22, 23.</sup> and this I do (saith the great Apostle) for the Gospels sake.

4. The fourth special Rule may be Edification, the grand Level of all Church power : the Edification of the Church, and not its destruction in the whole,

whole, or (if possible to avoid it) in any part.

Rôm 14.

15.

In quo

Charitas

moderatrix

est, Galv.

Rôm. 14:

10.

Therefore, the great principle of all such impositions must be *charity* and love to our Brethren ; not *envy* at, or desire of *revenge* upon any person or party otherwise minded : not to shew victory over them, or *dominion* over their faith or actions ; things, I doubt not sincerely abhorred by our present Governours as well as by our former ; but *forbearing* one another in love, and forgiving one another, as Christ also hath given us example, shewing all bowels and tenderness in all waies and means of an happy accord and accommodation.

5. Fifthly, the most noted

ted Rule of all is that of the Apostle, *Let all things be done decently and in order*: a standing Rule never to be crossed by any Authority under heaven; yea, the *God of heaven*, being the *God of Order*, will never reverse it. Then nothing that is either *indecent* or disorderly in Gods Worship can warrantably be imposed upon his Church. The *contrary* whereof, I think, had never hitherto the honour to be asserred.

*Clapham*, speaking of things indifferent, touching which (saith he) the Apost'e sheweth, that decency and order must be observed; but for *particulars*, he hath no particular

lar injunction from the  
*Lord. Chron. cap. 9.*

pag. 13.

Provided alwaies, saith  
*M<sup>r</sup> Mason*, that all things  
 be done *honestly and in or-*  
*der.*

6. The sixth Rule is  
*Custom* : of very great  
 use to indicate what is de-  
 cent and orderly : seeing  
 by the force of *Custom*,  
 that is comely in one  
 Country, that is plainly  
 absurd in another.

1 Cor.  
 11. 26.

*Custom* is the *Umpire*  
 in indifferent things : If  
 any man seem to be conten-  
 tious (saith the Apostle) we  
 have no such *Custom*. No  
 doubt, 'tis dangerous to in-  
 troduce innovations, and  
 by new impositions to force  
 against the *Usages* and Cu-  
 stomes of the place where

WC

we live. 'Tis well known, how much weight *Ambrose, Augustine*, and the rest of the Fathers laid upon this both for themselves, and their *advice* to others.

We have no such Custom, nor the Churches of God. Doubtless, the more *extensive* a Usage is, the more *ancient*, the more *universal*, the longer and farther a thing hath been practised in the Churches of God, the more it ought to be *regarded*, both by the governing and governed parts of the Church, according to the Rule of the Fathers.

7. The last Rule is *Gospel liberty*: this must not be *invaded* by any imposition,

position, though it must not be mistaken.

*Gospel* liberty can hardly be infringed, if *these Rules* be heeded in the imposition of things indifferent.

1. That *nothing* indifferent be imposed that any way checketh with the former Rules of *Expediency, Peace, Offence* of the weak, *Edification, Decency, Order,* and the *Customs* of the Churches.

2. That things *indifferent* be not imposed as if they were *in themselves necessary*; which Divines assert to be *Superstition*.

3. That things *indifferent* be not required with *equal severity* as things necessary.

4. That

4. That such things when imposed be *declared* by the Imposers to be *mutable* in their nature, and to be altered upon *just* occasion.

5. That things indifferent be not imposed in so great a *number* as is really *burthensome* to the Church of God; which was much in the care of our first Reformers.

Concerning the *multitude* of Ceremonies of idle and vain nature (saith Bi-In *Apol.* shop *Jewel*) we know that "St. *Augustine* did much  
"complain of them in his  
"time; and therefore we  
"have greatly *diminished*  
"the *number* of them, be-  
"cause we know, that  
"they were *troublesome* to  
"good

“good consciences and  
 “*burthen*some to the  
 “Church : yet we retain  
 “and have likeing, not on-  
 “ly of *those* Ceremonies  
 “which we are sure were  
 “*delivered* us from the A-  
 “*postles* ; but some others  
 “too besides, which we  
 “thought might be suf-  
 “fered without *hurt* to the  
 “Church of God : because  
 “we affected that all  
 “things in the Congrega-  
 “*tion* might (according to  
 “the will of the Apostle)  
 “be done with *comliness*  
 “and good *order*. But all  
 “such things which we  
 “perceived to lean to *Su-*  
 “*perstition*, or to be of no  
 “use, or bald, or toyish, or  
 “against the sacred Scri-  
 “*ptures*, or else *unmeet* for  
 “sober



“ sober and wise people,  
 “ whereof there is a con-  
 “ fused *Chaos* in the Ro-  
 “ mish *Synagogue*, all these  
 “ we have utterly renoun-  
 “ ced and cast off, because  
 “ we would not have the  
 “ Worship of God con-  
 “ founded and combred  
 “ with such *follies*. Thus  
 that most excellent Man.  
 The summ of whose words  
 here recited, doth in effect  
 contain and confirm all  
 that I have said upon this  
 Case ; viz. That the Ce-  
 remonies of the Church  
 ought to be *expedient*, *de-*  
*cent* and orderly, not *hurt-*  
*ful* to the Church, not  
*troublesome* to good Con-  
 sciences, not *burdensome* :  
 And he adds, that *our own*  
 Church in the *first* Re-  
 D        forma-

formation had regard to the said *Rules*.

Let me conclude with an humble *Petition*, that I be not *mis-interpreted* to *pre-scribe* to *Authority* in what I have said : I have onely *marked* the *general* *Rules* in *Scripture*, leaving *particulars* to the liberty and *wisedome* of *Superiours* ; to whom I only take boldness to offer, that they ought to walk by *these Rules*, and settle the *Church* and *Worship* of *God* in *peace* and *order*, with all comeliness and expediency.

## CASE IX.

CASE IX.

*How are private persons to demean themselves under such impositions of Authority in religious Exercises ?*

Resol.

**W**E have hitherto, rather laboured to discover the *reason* of *Imposing*, and the due extent of Ecclesiasticall Authority in things *indifferent* ; endeavouring also to draw *that as narrow and straight*, and as much to *Rule* as may be ; yet, I hope, without just offence to the same.

We are now descending to take a *view* of the *rea-*

D 2

*son*

*son of the obedience ; and to consider the extent of their duty, who are under command. Where, that I may appear impartial and for peace indeed, I must be consonant to my Designe, and labour to dis-intangle and enlarge the consciences of private persons, with as much freedom towards conformity as lawfully I may ; that, having brought the Injunction as low and narrow, and the Obedience as high and large as we may, the commanders and the commanded may be happily found nearer together, and in sweeter communion one with another.*

*Charity, surely, will not be displeased at this harmless project, but will be ready*

ready with a *pardon*, though I fail of *success*, or too *imprudently* manage the *Attempt*; especially, while my *Aime* is levelled at so *desireable* an end, the *peace* of the Church and the *common good*; and use no other *Engine* to draw down the one, and raise the other, but that from heaven, the *holy Scripture*.

And to the *Case* in *general*, which is this, [How are *private* persons to demean themselves under the commands of *Authority* or *Ecclesiastical Laws*, in *Religious Exercises* ?] I shall now (the Lord assisting me) betake my self, with *all conscience* and *fidelity*, to answer, breaking it into several *particular*

D 3      *Cases*,

*cases, according as the Object of humane Injunctions may be distinguished.*

The *Object of humane Injunction*, or that which is enjoined or commanded, may be proceeded upon by a *gradation* or descent of *five steps* : for that which is enjoined, is either *necessary, expedient, purely indifferent, inexpedient, or unlawfull.* Accordingly, there may be offered *five Cases*, viz. what a *private person* ought to do, when things *necessary*, or things *expedient*, or things *purely indifferent*, or things *inexpedient*, or things *unlawfull*, are required by Authority in the exercises of *Religion* : to all which we address our  
selves

selves to apply a sever-  
ed and particular *Satis-*  
*faction.*

---

CASE X.

*What ought a private Chri-*  
*stian to do, when things*  
*necessary in themselves*  
*are required by Autho-*  
*rity?*

Resol.

**B**Oth for the *Intention*  
of the present *Dis-*  
*course* ( we treating pro-  
perly about things indiffe-  
rent ) as also, for the very  
*Nature* of the *thing* it self,  
this need not be put to the  
*Question.*

For though some have

D 4 thought

thought they have seen reason enough, not to fly to countenance an *Usurpation*, as to do their *duties* when commanded thereunto by *unlawful* powers; from the liberty of that trite Rule, *Affirmative Precepts* doe not binde to every particular instance of time: yet, it were a strange perverseness in any, not to doe that which God requires, because his *Vicergerent*, lawful Authority requires it also, even in the things of Gods *Worship*.

*Optatus* reckoned it a madness in *Donatus*, that broke forth in that question of his, *Quid Imperatori cum Ecclesia?* What hath the KING to do with the Church? But *Optatus* wisely



ly answered, *The Commonwealth is not in the Church, but the Church is in the Commonwealth*; and consequently, *he that is Governor of the Commonwealth is so of the Church*; and the Rule is, *The Gospel takes not away the Precepts of Nature, and the Moral Law, but establisheth and perfects them, and rather enlargeth and confirms, then any way weakens Obedience to Authority.*

*Non tollit  
praecepta  
naturae &  
legis, sed  
perficit,  
Rom. 3 ult.*

Therefore are we to pray for Kings, that under their pious and religious governance, we may not live in peace, and honestly only, but in godliness, in all godliness, as the Apostle directs us.

D 5 St Augu-

Contra  
Crescon.  
lib. 3. cap.  
51.

St *Augustine*, upon those words in the second *Psalme* saith, *Kings* (not onely as *men*, but as they are *Kings*) *serve the Lord*, if in their *Kingdomes* they *command* that which is *good*, and *prohibite* that which is *evil*; not onely in those things which appertain to *humane Society*, *verum etiam in iis quæ ad divinam Religionem*, but also in matters concerning *Religion* and *divine Worship*.

*Who* dare offer to name the *Time* since the *World* began (the *Times* of *persecution* which rendred it impossible only excepted) wherein *God* did not *allow*, & *Governours* both *Temporal* and *Ecclesiastical* did  
not

not assume the power of governing and giving *Laws* to the *Church*, for the discharge of their duties in *matters of Religion*.

As soon as the black and bloody cloud was dispel'd, by the favour and power of glorious *Constantine*, he assumed this *Supremacy*; he put down *Idolatry*, he establish'd the *Truth*; he composed differences among the *Bishops*, suppressed *Heresie* and *Schism*, called *Councils*: and gave his *suffrage* in them; he heard and judged *Causes* in *Religion*, and made *Ecclesiastical Lawes* and *Edicts*; and all this, (as *Eusebius* saith;) *tanquam* *communis Episcopus à Deo* *constitutus*, as a common

*Euseb. de  
vita Con-  
stan. lib. i.  
cap. 37.*

Over-

Overseer or Bishop *ordained* of God ; and I may adde, as an excellent *Example* to all *Christian Princes* to the end of the world.

Doubtless, if he that *resists* a *lawfull* power shall receive to himselfe *damnation*, he shall hardly escape that *resists* his command in *lawfull*, yea, in *necessary* things ; wherein (if in any thing) he ought to obey, for the *Lords sake*, and to submit in *conscience* of his duty to God as well as *Man* ; for, as *Augustine*, *Hoc jubent Imperatores, quod jubet & Christus ; quia cum bonum jubent, per illos non nisi Christus jubet* . so that when *Kings* command, what *Christ* has first  
con-

Commanded, *Christ* commands *by them*, and we are called to obey, not onely *them*, but *Christ* in them.

---

CASE XI.

*What private persons are to do, when things expedient are required of them?*

Resol.

THE *second* sort of things enjoined in the exercise of Religion, we have proposed to be things *expedient* for their present and *special* use, though not *necessary* in their *common* nature, or particularly commanded by  
God

God. And the Question is, *When such things are required by lawful authority, whether private persons are bound in Duty to obey, or not ?*

Some persons, I believe, like not that any *such* thing should be *imposed* upon them ; but would rather have the *Decent ordering* of *Gods* Worship left to their own *private* discretion: yet I hope better of my Brethren, then that they should refuse the exercise of any thing which *themselves* allow, because it is also approved by others, and commanded by *authority* ; and therefore to be *disorderly* in the Church of God, because they are *enjoyed* to doe things in *order* :

Such

Such things as we know to be fitted for the *decency* and order of *Gods Worship* if enjoined by a lawfull Authority, though they be not *necessary* in their *common nature*, or *particularly* commanded by God : and thus, though they want a *primary* necessity ; yet they seem, in the judgment of all sober men , to contract a treble *secondary* necessity, to *oblige* us to obedience ; *viz.* from the *general commands* of *Scripture*, from the *particular injunction* of *Authority*, and the urging *direction* of our own *conscience* ; where *God*, indeed, seems to speak *thrice* at once unto us : by the *Rule* of the *Apostle*, the *Law* of the *Land*, and the

the voice of our own convicted Consciences.

Dec. 2.  
Sect. 1.

Such *Constitutions* (saith *Bullinger*) as are *expedient* and drawn from *general Scripture*, and are for *edification*, I call not *Humane Traditions*.

Confes.  
Suev. in  
Harm.  
Confes.  
8. 17. pag.  
290.

Yea, one of the *Reformed Churches* have put it into their very *Confession*, That they deserve to be esteemed *Divine* rather than *Humane Constitutions*.

Calv. in  
1 Cor. 14.

For, saith Mr *Calvin*, such are not to be reckoned for *humane Traditions*, since they are founded in the *general precept*, and have the liquid approbation, as it were, of *Christs own mouth*.

Zanch. in  
com. loc.  
16.

Bez.  
Epist. 24.

*Beza*, therefore, concludes



cludes, That things that make for order, being commanded by Authority, do so far bind the conscience, that no man can wilfully transgress them without sin.

---

CASE XII.

Resol.

*What are private persons to do, when things that are purely Indifferent are required in Religious Exercises?*

THAT thing I here call purely Indifferent w<sup>ch</sup> impartially retaines a mid place betwixt things necessary and things sinfull, and betwixt

betwixt things *inexpedient* and things *expedient*; more plainly, we take a thing to be *purely indifferent*, here, that is neither *necessary* or *sinful* in its *Nature*, or by the *Word* of God; nor yet *expedient* or *inexpedient*, as to the *use* for which it is appointed, but in *all* regards *purely indifferent*, being neither *necessary* with a primary or with a *secundary necessity*, as we lately distinguished; nor yet *respectively sinful* or *unlawful*, *viz.* either with a primary or *secundary* *sinfulness*.

Now the Question is *not*, whether there be any *such things*, or *not*; but, *hoc supposito*, supposing there are, and that they are

*comman-*

commanded by lawfull Authority ; the Question is, *What private Christians are to do in such a Case ?*

For my part, though (as I have said) *such things ought not to be enjoined by Authority ; yet, if the Scales be even before, the command of Authority must (I think) of necessity turn them.*

So that here we must observe a *third kind of Necessity*, where the two former are wanting : so that, where a thing is not necessary properly, or occasionally, as expedient, yet, it may become necessary by the addition of a *humane Law* ; which also circulates into the first necessity of a *divine command* ;

mand *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of man for the Lords sake*: though it be but a meer humane Ordinance, yet (as such) if not *sinfull* or forbidden by God, you seem commanded to submit unto it.

Consequently, we have discovered a *third* kinde of *sinfulness*, where the *primary* and *secondary* is wanting: so that, where a thing is not *sinfull* in it *self*, or by any *inconvenience* in its use, yet it may become so, by *disobedience* to lawfull Authority: *Obeey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves.*

'Tis necessary we observe a difference in the *reason* of *imposing*

*imposing* and of *obeying*:  
For, before a thing is im-  
posed, there is no *obligation*  
upon Authority to require  
it, if it be not fit; yea, ra-  
ther there is a *pre-obligation*  
to impose nothing but  
what is *expedient* in the  
Worship of God; but  
now, when a thing is *once*  
*required*, though not *expe-*  
*dient*, as we could desire,  
we are under an *obligation*;  
and we must not consult  
our liberty, but our *duty*:  
or if our *liberty*, not so  
much our *liberty to forbear*,  
as our *liberty to obey*; and  
to enquire whether the  
thing be *lawful* or not,  
whether God will *allow* us  
to do it or not; and if *so*,  
Whether it be not our *du-*  
*ty*: and whether, though  
we

we would not do it for the *things sake*, we must not do it for the *commands sake*; the command of *Man*, and the command of *God*.

Wherefore *Beza* ( to whom I might add the *Learned* of most *ranks* and *ages*, if need required ) is so express, *Res Alioqui per se media, &c.* Things of middle and indifferent nature do after a certain manner change their nature, when by lawful Authority  
 “ they are either *command-*  
 “ *ed* or *forbidden*, because  
 “ it is not lawful to omit  
 “ against the *Precept* when  
 “ it is commanded, or to  
 “ act against the *prohibiti-*  
 “ *on*, when it is forbidden.  
 Thus *Beza* : an *undoubted*  
 Te-

Testimony in the Case.

But we need no more, seeing the thing hath been granted long ago by a numerous body of Non-conformists; "In things (say  
"they) truly indifferent, it  
"is alwayes justified, and  
"shall be farther justified if need require, that  
"we attribute no less to  
"the *Magistrates*, then  
"our *Adversaries* (meaning the *Conformists*) do.

Their Reply to Mr. Pouch, p. 21

---

CASE

---

## CASE XIII.

*What are private Christians to do when things Inexpedient are required of them?*

**Resol.**

**I**N the Fourth place, things enjoyned about the Worship of God may be supposed to be *inexpedient* when they are properly unlawful.

Here we also have asserted there is a farther abuse of Authority that ought alwayes to be limited by the *Sacred Canons of Decency and Order*, and things *expedient*; but admitting such



such an *unwarrantable* exerting of power, in requiring things that are *lawfull*, but *inexpedient*; we are now to inquire how a *private* conscience may preserve it *self* and the *publick Peace*, and whether it should *obey* such injunctions or not.

This is indeed the *burthen*; but how to remove it, *hic labor, hoc opus est*.

This, in the first place, seems to call us to *another* point of weighty *moment*, viz. Who is the *proper Judge of expediency* in the circumstances of Gods *Worship*?

There are but *two* that can bid for it; the *publick* prudence of lawfull *Authority*, or our own *private* discretion: in things

E

ne-

*necessary*, the *Word* of God is our *Rule*; in things *expedient*, *Prudence*: the Question is, Whether *private* or *publique*? that is, (pardon my plainnesse) where God hath left the matter *to men*, Whether, the *People* or the *Governours* should *Rule*? or, if you had rather, Whether they that are called to obey, are not bound to *submit themselves*, where God himself *interposeth* not, to those that have the *Rule* over them?

All, I know, will acknowledge, that when *S<sup>t</sup>. Paul* had determined the decency and order of particular things in the Church, that it would have been very *Tumultuary* for the people to have said, These

These things seem strange to us, and *inexpedient* : And the *like* censure would have passed upon those, *Act. 15.* had they returned the like *remora* to the *Synodical Sentenc* . Forgive me the wrong , Dear Reader, if I remember *that* of the *Poet*, *Mutato nomine, &c.*

It may farther challenge a *sober* debate, Whether the *Ax* is not thus laid at the root of all polity and Government in the World , if once we grant the *final Judgement* of what is *fit* and orderly to *private* persons , and that this ought to be the *Rule* of every ones practice.

I must beg leave of the people to judge with *Plato*, *Nullus sensus privatus re-*

*rum mensura est.* I mean no more, but that every one is to judge what is *necessary* according to God; but *publick* Authority onely what is *expedient*; and I think we have reason to advise, before we either give the things that are God's, viz. *necessary* things, to *Cesar*, or the things that are *Cesar's*, that is, things *expedient*, to the people.

I do acknowledge the people a *Judgement of Discretion*, the guide and measure of every ones actions, viz. to discern what *God* saith in things *necessary*, and what *humane Authority* saith in things *expedient*, and to obey both; but for the people to be *wise above what is written* in

*about things Indifferent.*

77

in the Bible, to judge what is *necessary*, and what is required by the *Laws* of the Land, to judge what is *expedient*, I fear is folly, and tends to *confusion* in the Church and State.

Where *God* commands, and *Man* forbids; or where *God* forbids, and *Man* commands, we are bound by the Covenant of *Nature* and *Grace* to acknowledge the *supremacy of Heaven*, and to obey *God* rather than *Man*: But where *God* is silent, and *Man* commands, *Obedience to our Governours* is farre better (having more of Religion and Order in it) than *sacrificing* to the *net* of our *private Reason* for things more expedient.

E 3

Je-

Instir.  
lib.4.17,  
43.

*Jesus Christ* having fixt by his own appointment all the *Essentials* of his Fathers Worship, left the *Circumstances* of Decency and Order in the manner of performance, as things too small to engage the Wisdom of Heaven to the Church, as if there were some thing in this regard in that common saying, *Non vacat exiguis rebus*, &c. Hereupon Calvin concludes, *Hæc indifferentia sunt, & in Ecclesiæ libertate posita. Indifferent things*, things not decided by God, are left in the liberty of the Church: Not in the liberty of every Member; 'twere easie to shew, that was not *Calvins* meaning, no more than

than it was the *Apostles*, who denied that *liberty* to the *people*, and gave them particular Orders himself, than which there is nothing more evident in Scripture.

*Consulte agit qui praecepto legis obtemperat*, saith the *Civilian* : And no doubt when it is not *sin*, 'tis wisdom to obey the *Law* : It is seasonable to call to mind and to practise too : *Leges hominum, non homines legum dominos esse oportet* : It is fitter that *Laws* should govern *Men*, than that *Men*, private men, every private man should govern the *Laws* : still I must be understood in things not determined by *God*, for then we are pre-  
 E 4 obliged

obliged by a *higher Law*, which supersedes the *lower*; and not *we*, but *God* contradicts such *Laws of Men* as are against his *own*: But when the matter is left to *Men*, and they command us; for us out of a pretended *Judgement of discretion*, to object *inconvenience* and *inexpedience*, and to resist the power, savours but little of either *Judgement* or *Discretion*.

But, that I may offer all *fair* satisfaction to this *great* scruple, I crave leave to admit the *private* Conscience into the *Chair*, and then the *Case* stands thus.

CASE



CASE.

*Whether any thing that in our private judgement is unfit and inconvenient to be used in the exercise of Religion, may be warrantably practised by us when commanded thereunto by Authority?*

Resol.

**I** Would be very far from the guilt of winding the conscience of the plain Reader into any needlesse intricacy in this practical Case; yet I must presume a little upon him, to make way for my Answer hereunto, by a few plain distinctions.

E 5      1. There

1. There is a fitnessse or expedience with respect to *Governours* or private persons ; *their* command or *our* obedience : whence arise two great Cases , that must be distinguished and not confounded ; 1. What is fit for *Authority* to require ? 2. What is fit for *us* to do ?

No question, our *Rulers* may possibly require that which is *not fit* to be required ; and consequently , that which they *ought not* to require : and *such* their impositions may be *sinfull* as to *them* ; which yet I doubt not may be *lawfull* and fit for *us*.

Whether *Rulers* exert their power in things *Indifferent* as they ought, or not,

not , I judge , more immediately concerns the *conscience* of *Rulers* , rather than of us *private* persons : with us , the great and next and most concerning Case is this ; Not so much what *Rulers* may require, as what we may do ; or rather , not so much what it is fit for *them* to impose, as what is fit for *us* to do.

2. There is again a fitnessse or expediency *quoad rem* , and *quoad nos* : Or more plainly, *fitnessse* is considerable in a more *large* and general sense, as applied to its *subject* , that is , to the Service that is to be performed , without any farther considering of any other circumstances of it ; as the fitnessse of *kneeling*,  
*stand-*

*standing*, or *sitting* at the Sacrament : or in a more *strict* and qualified application to my *particular* action of *kneeling*, *standing*, or *sitting*, &c. as it is accompanied with all the circumstances and intanglements of my *private* Case.

And thus we discover *two* Cases more : Whether in *general* and *quoad rem*, or according to the nature of the thing to do this or that ; *e.g.* to receive the Sacrament *kneeling*, or *sitting*, or *standing*? or secondly, What is fittest for *us* to do, all the *circumstances* and obligations of our private and particular Cases first *duely* pondered? for I little doubt, but that at length it will sufficiently appear, that that  
which

*about things Indifferent.*

85

which is not so fit in it self,  
may yet be expedient for  
us to do : And therefore  
give me leave once again  
to state you the Question  
thus.

### CASE.

*Whether, if Authority re-  
quire that which is law-  
full it self, but not expe-  
dient, all things conside-  
red, it may not be both  
lawfull and expedient to  
obey and do it ?*

### Resol.

**T**Here is nothing more  
plain and certain, than  
that the *same* lawfull things,  
at divers times and to di-  
vers

vers persons, were judged by the *Apostle* to be both *expedient* and *inexpedient*, both in his *doctrine* and *practice*; who became a *Jew* to the *Jews*, and a *Grecian* to the *Grecians*; and even all things to all men, that he might win some.

Upon the like ground *Ambrose*, *Augustine*, &c. held that *expedient* for themselves and others to practise in one Church, which they judged altogether unfit in another of a different usage.

Now what should be the reason of this mutability of Indifferent things? This well pursued will carry us far towards a solution of this great difficulty.  
No.

about things Indifferent.

87.

No doubt *Polanus* hit upon it, whose words are weighty and justly worthy of all acceptation by such as desire satisfaction about the nature and use, the fitnessse or unfitnessse of things Indifferent.

*Adiaphora res sunt licite vel illicitæ pro circumstantiarum ratione* : Things

*Polani*

tom. 2.

pag. 376.

Indifferent (saith he) are lawfull or unlawfull, by reason of their circumstances ; for which he cites *Rom. 14. 20, 21. 1 Cor. 8. 13.* But, put case that circumstances allow or dissuade on both sides ; that there are either inconveniences to deterr, or advantages to invite on both sides ; What is to be done in such a case? *Polanus* there-

therefore adds, *Hic autem in Circumstantiarum pugna & contrarietate, minoris momenti, iis quæ majoris momenti, pauciores pluribus cedant: i. e.* Where there is a contest and contrariety of Circumstances, those that are *lesse* in weight and fewer in number must give way to those that are *greater* and *more*, Rom. 14. 21.

So that, would you know, whether it be fit to obey Authority in things that are *lawfull* be *inexpedient*, bring the *Case* to the *Test*. Where is the *overballance* of expedience and fitnessse? Consider and weigh the Circumstances on both sides, and examine whether to follow our *own judgement* and disobey Authority



ry in an *inconvenience*, or to do that which is inconvenient *in obedience* to Authority, be really attended with the more or fewer, the greater or lesse *inconveniences*. I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say, and answer your selves.

Yet, that I may minister all my *assistance* to my Readers *Conscience*, let us in earnest put the question, Whether the *Conveniences* of Obedience in such a case may not greatly *overbear* the *expediency* of the thing required?

Truely, in my most serious pondering of this weighty matter, there are three things of so great concern, and even *indispensable*

*sable conveniency*, if I may so undervalue them that offer their attendance to *such an Obedience*, that the *ordinary inconvenience* of any *lawfull* thing enjoyned seems very *light* and *inconsiderable* to them; the very *mention* of them, one would think, is of weight sufficient to sway the *balance*: they are *Peace*, *Duty*, *Safety*; in the behalf of each of these, we shall venture to engage a *particular comparison*.

---

---

Sect. I. Of Peace.

**W**Hen we must either conform to an *inexpedient indifferent* thing; or by our *non-conformity* break or but hazard the *peace*, let such as have been *scorch'd* in the flames of *contention*, or carry about them the *skarrs* of *Warr*, or have any way learn'd to value *peace*, judge what is to be done.

*P E A C E* (as the Naturalists say of the *Radical Moisture*) is the *Root* of all things; but by the *heats* of trouble and publique contention, (alas!) how soon does our glory and good-

goodlinesse *wither*, and all prosperity *die* away? Who trembles not at the *thought*, yea, at the very *motion* towards a thought, of being guilty of throwing the least *brand* into this fire; lest (as a Reverend Divine adds) he should be made a *firebrand* in Hell? Say not, Thy *particular*, or thy party is inconsiderable; a *spark* unthought of, unseen, and almost invisible, turns a *Citie* into ashes: How great a matter a little fire kindles!

*Aqui. in*

*Mat. 12.*

Therefore saith one, *Sicut vita in homine, ita pax in regno, &c.* Peace in a Kingdom is as life in a man: and as health is nothing but a *temper* of the humors,

humors, so there is *Peace* where every thing keeps its *own Order*; and as when *health* fails, the man tends to *death*; so when *Peace* departs, a Kingdom tends to *desolation*; whence the great and last intention, is, to keep the *Peace*.

O that men would a little consider; what do they lose by doing that which they judge *inexpedient*, if it be lawfull? Not *Peace* with *God*, he hath not forbidden it; not *Peace* of *Conscience*, that allows it; not *Peace* with *Authority*, that commands it. What then? A little *pleasing* of *our selves*, a small portion of private satisfaction, and the enjoyment of our *liberty* in a thing *indifferent*, be-

because we judge it not to be expedient.

Again, Oh that it were well considered, what is *lost* with the *Peace* of the Church, what we hazard when we hazard this.

Ah ! what convenience is offered to ballance the necessity of *Peace* ? what can satisfie the *losse* of *Peace* ? where is our *liberty* when *Peace* is gone ? how dreadfull are the fruits of *Contentions* ? who sayls to the *Indies* in hopes of a *people* ; or would venture all in the hazard of so necessary a thing as *Peace*, for so small a matter as his *private* content in a *bare expediency* ? Can this *expediency* that we desire warrant us against all the *Precepts*, per-

perswasions, beseechings of the God of Peace, to pray for, *study, seek, pursue,* and follow after peace? Can this defend us from the *threatnings* denounced against the *troublers* of *Israel*? or make up the losse of all the comforts of the *sons of Peace*, and the *blesse*dnesse promised to *peace-makers*?

Yea, let it be considered, whether in things Indifferent, if there be any *hazard* of the *peace* of the Church one way or other; the question must not be so much, What is expedient, and what not; but *what makes for peace*, and what not: And if this be the case indeed with us, let that weighty advice of the

the blessed *Apostle* sink deep into our *conscience*, and *decide* the Controversie ; which if sincerely heeded, it being so *thoroughly* fitted to this very case, I dare be bold to say , must needs do it. *Let us follow after the things that make for peace ;* q. d. in these indifferent things (of which he was treating) trouble not your selves *over-much* : some may think *this* expedient, some *that* ; but in these things , let me persuade you to make *peace* your *Rule* ; and while others, with too much heat, enflame their contentions, about what is *fittest* , to the *breach* of the *peace*, and the trouble of the Church ; be you sure, to *mark* those things

Rom. 14.  
13.



things that *make* for peace,  
and follow them. Fly  
contention, and too much  
scrupulosity in such things,  
and follow after things which  
*make* for peace.

Upon the *like* grounds,  
no doubt, S<sup>r</sup>. *Augustine* re-  
ceived that grave advice of  
S<sup>r</sup>. *Ambrose*, as if it had  
been an Oracle, To conform  
to the Usages of every  
Church where he came, as he  
would neither take nor give  
offence. S<sup>r</sup>. *Augustine* al- Epist. ii8.  
so gives the like advice up-  
on somewhat the like rea-  
son; for the sake of the So-  
ciety of those, with whom we  
live.

That which *Beza* re-  
ports of *Calvin* is very  
remarkable. In *Calvins* Bez. in vit.  
absence, it seems, the *Wa-calv.*

F fer-

*fer-cake* was brought into the *Sacrament* at *Geneva*: now, though *Calvin* judged it very *inconvenient*, yet he judged the *peace* more *needfull*, and did earnestly admonish them not to be *contentions* about a thing *indifferent*. And in so good a temper his words took them, that they, both *Ministers* and *People*, followed his *Counsel*.

*Calv. Ep.*  
379.

This was nothing but the *Application* of that *General Rule* which *Calvin* commended to *Christians* in his *own* writings, with which we shall seal up this particular: Though a thing (saith he) be imposed, should bring offence, and draw ill consequences with it, (that is, be *inexpedient*)

*about things Indifferent.*

99

dient) yet if in it self it be not repugnant to Gods Word, it may be yielded unto, especially where the greater part prevaileth; in which he is but a *member* of that *body*, and can proceed no farther: and by consequence *Non-conformity* would hazard peace.

---

Sect. 2. *Of Duty.*

**T**He *second* thing that lies in *scale* against the *Inexpediency* of things imposed, is that weighty thing called *DUTY*.

Here there seems to be so much *odds*, that the *Question* is no longer what we *may* do, or what is *fit* for us to do, but what

F 2

we

we *must* : So that *may* is over-weighed by *must*, fit by *just*, liberty and expediency by *duty* and *necessity*, with respect to *God* and to the *Magistrate*.

1. There is a *must* from *God* ; a *necessity* laid upon us from *Heaven*, and woe be to *Ministers* if they *preach* not the *Gospel* ; and woe be to the *People* if they *attend* not the *Ordinances* ; besides, the *necessity* of *Obedience* to *Magistrates* on both.

But now there is no *must* not perform such *Indifferent* things, as we scruple at for their *inexpediency* ; yet, we fear, that so it may happen, that *refusing* to obey *Authority* in such *indifferent* things, may inca-

incapacitate us for the discharge of those necessary *Duties*, necessary with respect to *Gods* command, and the great *Salvation* of immortal Souls.

This very Consideration turned the Scale in that old but most Eminent *Non-Conformist* T. C. his judgment long ago about the Book. Surplice. "The truth is, "saith he, (though in another Book of his before he had called the *Surplice a Mark and Sacrament of Popish Abomination*) I dare not be Author to any to forsake his *Pastoral Charge* for the inconvenience; and giveth this very Reason, Because *Preaching* is the absolute *Command* of God, and

F 3 "there-

“therefore ought not to  
 “be laid aside for a *simple*  
 “inconvenience or uncom-  
 “linefle of a thing which  
 “in its nature is *indiffe-*  
 “rent.

2. There is a *must* also from man. Our Rulers, under God, do also give us our *Care of Souls*, which we accept from them; they command us to *Preach*, and *feed the Flock*: they lastly injoyn us to dispense our *duty* with such and such *circumstances*, which they judge most *convenient*: God also adds his command, that we should for *conscience sake*, yea, for *his own sake* (*Magistrates* being his *Vice-gerents*) *submit our selves to every Ordinance of man*, that is not

not contrary to the *Ordinance of God.*

Now this is the very Case: and surely it must be a *very greae* inconvenience, attending a *circumstance* of our *duty*, that can out-weigh our *duty*: our duty to God, to our *Prince*, to our *Places*, to our *Consciences*, and to the *Souls* of the people.

Let me humbly enter this *caveat*, take heed of resisting the *Ordinance of God* while you condemn a humane Institution. The *Ordinance of Man* may be *inconvenient*; but resisting the *Ordinance of God* is plainly *sinfull*, and sadly attended.

I shall therefore commend the *fatherly Coun-*

Aug. Ep.  
86.

set of *Augustine* unto you,  
and therewith also seal up  
this Particular. "In those  
"things (saith he) in which  
"the *holy Scripture* hath  
"made no certain ap-  
"pointment, let the cu-  
"stoms of the people of  
"God, or *instituta majo-*  
"*rum*, the injunctions of  
"Governors, be held for a  
"Law.

### SECT. 3. Of Safety.

THE *last* great conveni-  
ency that I shall leave  
in the *ballance* against the  
expediency desired & stuck  
upon, is that of *Safety* and  
*Preservation*.

Besides our *own*, which  
happily we little regard, the  
*safety*



*safety* of our *party*, which we may too *much* value, the *safety* of the *people*, their *great Salvation*, yea, the very concern of *Religion*, and the *pomer* of *Godliness*; these, no doubt, are things of *Weight* with all *prudent* and good men.

But I humbly Request, my *Discontented Brethren*; May not *such* things as these, these very things, yea, all these things be *hazarded* by *checking* at *Obedience* in things *inexpedient*, barely *inexpedient*?

Do not you *fear*? do not you *say* that you certainly fore-see, that you already begin to *feel* the losse of your interest in a Gracious *KING*, in the *Laws* of the Land, the laying  
F 5                      down.

down of the *Ministry*, and the committing of the precious souls of your poor people to the *care*, or rather *neglect* of a *blind* and *fottish*, *carelesse* and *scandalous Ministry*? Is there nothing in these, *in all of these*, can *recompence* the losse of a bare *expediency*, or the trouble of the contrary? God forbid.

Do not you *fear*, (forgive my plainnesse) do you not *say* you *fear* that your *Non-conformity* may tempt the *Conformists* to lean to *Papery* for support? If so, my Brethren, (though others *fear* it not) may not this endanger the *Church* of God among us, yea, all the *Reformed Churches* in the *World*, (which may some-

somewhat depend upon  
*ours*) to be swallowed up  
 by the *Common Enemy*? Is  
 this the case, my brethren?  
 do you indeed judge it so?  
 and will you be at *no trouble*  
 to *save* them? will you  
 part with no *convenience*, to  
 preserve them? is your  
 own content and private  
 liberty, in so *small* a matter,  
 of *greater* moment than all  
 the *Churches*? Alas! had  
 our *L O R D* valued them *Certum est*  
 at no higher rate, they *omnia li-*  
 had hardly been the *pur-* *cere pro*  
*chase* of his *Patria* Precious  
*Quintill.*  
**B L O O D.**

What *hope* of expedien-  
 cy can repair the danger?  
 yea, what expediency, if  
*obtained*? which yet is but  
 our aim, and can hardly be  
 secured in the *accident*, if  
 the

the *substance* miscarry; our admired *expediency* being equally *hazarded* by our *Non-conformity* with all the rest, *viz.* the *Peace* of the Church, our *duty* to God and Man, the favour of the *King*, the *Gospel* of Christ, the *service* of the Church, the *salvation* of Souls, the safety of the *Kingdom*, and the Protestant Cause in the World.

Who can so fondly imagine that the God of all *these* can have any regard to the *lean Sacrifice* of our expediency, with so much *prodigality*, so little regard to *mercy* and charity, and such dreadful *hazards*?

But to bring it closer to our selves; I doubt not to affirm, that our own *private*  
*safety*

*safety*, the safety of our persons, our families and estates, may justly challenge some influence, when concerned, upon our conformity in lawfull things, though somewhat *inexpedient*. But seeing so many are preparing themselves to glory in such kind of *sufferings*, though attended with all the *hazards* lately named, we shall put the Case.

---

CASE.

---

## CASE.

*Whether is it fit or lawfull to  
expose our selves and ours  
to sufferings, rather than  
conform in things lawfull  
but inexpedient?*

Resol.

**T**Ruly to me it seemeth  
a strange *prodigality*,  
neither *fit* nor *lawfull*, but  
more, far more unfit and *in-*  
*expedient* than the very  
things that are scrupled at,  
be they very *inexpedient*,  
as some conceive, if they be  
but *lawfull*.

In such kind of suffer-  
ings to me appeareth *little*  
or *no good*, but *much evil*.

1. I see but little good  
in

*about things Indifferent.*

III

in them, because I can find no *call* unto them.

We are indeed invited to *hazard*, yea, to *suffer* the *losse* and *pain* of all things for Christ his sake, and the Gospels, and for Righteousnesse sake; this, is, for the *Testimony of Jesus*; this is the one thing *necessary*; all other things are *not necessary* in comparison, in competition with this: Alas! this is far from a bare expediency; 'tis the *substance*, and more than the Accidents and Circumstances that God calls us to suffer for.

If we suffer for things *expedient*, we suffer for our own apprehension of what is so, and not for the *Word of God*, that hath left it unde-

decided what is so ; and consequently , what ever we tempt our selves with-  
all , such Suffering is far from *Martyrdome* , which lies in the *Cause* , as well as the *Occasion* and *Intention*.

We find no *Command* requiring , no *Example* of Christ , his Prophets or Apostles fore-going , no *Promises* encouraging us in such *kind* of suffering ; and how then can we expect any *Comfort* in them , *Support* under them , or *Reward* for them ?

Yea , do not we meet with a *check* to the contrary , for such zeal and forwardnesse , from a *Prudent* Person ? *Be not righteous ever-much ; Why shouldst thou*



*about things Indifferent.*

113

*thou destroy thy self before  
thy time?*

2. As little good, so much  
evil appears in them: for  
such causelesse call-lesse suf-  
ferings injure God, the  
Church, our selves.

1. God, on whom we fa-  
ther our *private* opinions  
for which we suffer, as if  
they were his *Cause*; usurp-  
ing also the *honour* and dig-  
nity of *suffering for Christ*,  
which he hath not yet given  
us.

2. The Church, thus  
denying her our *Ministe-  
ry*, putting our *candle* un-  
der a *buskel*, or being  
*thieves* to her *light*;  
*tempting* the *weak* that un-  
derstand not our *Reasons*,  
to suffer with us without a  
cause; and doing our part  
to

to make *such breaches*, and to raise such a *storm* as may *shipwrack* all.

3. *Our selves*; from whom, as one sayes, God calls for the *calves of our lips*, but we offer him our *lives*, our *liberties*, our *wives*, our *children*, &c. before he requires them at our hands; wherein I tremble to put it to a question, Whether there be more of *Martyrdom* or *Murther*.

If my advice be any thing to be regarded, rather obey as far as *God* and *Conscience* will permit; and when they check you, *suffer*, and *suffer cheerfully*; suffer for *God*, suffer for *Conscience*, and suffer *comfortably*; but if you stop your course of obedience before *God* call  
and

*about things Indifferent.*

115

& *conscience* checks, be your *private* reasons what they can, I think there is cause to fear lest such *hasty* sufferings are of *your* selves, and rather *punishments* of your inconsideratenesse and disobedience, than any degree of *Martyrdom*.

Give me leave to end in plainnesse, as dealing with *Conscience*, and aiming at the *safety* of my Brethren. If we throw away the *Talents* that God hath lent us, and pay him in *Coin* he will not own, he may justly send us, for our wages, to those we have served, our *evil surmises* (I speak it soberly) and the jealousies and *fears* of our *Brethren*.

'Tis plain, that a promise  
of      outward      prosperity  
                                 gives

gives just encouragement  
for obedience to Authority ;  
*Honour thy Father and thy  
Mother , that thy dayes may  
be long upon the Land which  
the Lord thy God giveth  
thee.*

---

#### CASE XIV.

*What are private persons to  
do, when things sinful are  
imposed ?*

Resol.

**I** Would not be mistaken,  
I have not hitherto been,  
and I trust never shall be  
an *Advocate* for sin or sin-  
ful impositions ; I have on-  
ly pleaded for a just and  
*peaceable* Self-denial , and sub-

submission to the *Laws* of the *Place* where we live, in *lawfull things*. We are descending to the lowest step, from things *Necessary*, *Expedient*, purely *Indifferent*, and *Inexpedient*, (all which have had their particular debate) to the last Object of imposition proposed, viz. *Things unlawful*; to consider what we are to do, should Authority require Conformity in *things unlawful*.

That I may speak fully, and as I humbly desire, *satisfactorily*, to this doubt, I shall take the *liberty* of distinction.

Things are *sinful*, either,

1. In themselves, viz. such as God prohibits.

2. Or, *To us*, such as we judge

judge to be forbidden of God: Or,

3. *Unto others*, such as *others* judge to be *sinful*, when they are neither so *in themselves*, nor judged so by *us* that are to use them; according to which distribution we are further invited to the consideration of *three Cases*.

1. What we are to do when things sinful in themselves are required. Or,

2. When such things are required as *appear* sinful to *our selves*. Or,

3. If not to our selves, to *others* that will be offended at our obedience.

## CASE I.

CASE I.

*What are we to do when things of themselves and materially evil are commanded by Authority?*

Resol.

**S**T. *Augustine* delivered much in those few words, *There can be no Law that is not just.* S<sup>t</sup>. *Bernard* gives us a smart explication and account of it; *What man commands*, in such a case, *God forbids*, and so repeals and nuls it; or rather by a pre-declaring his *Will* against it, by whom *Kings* *Reign*, it is void of it self *ipso facto*.

Hereupon the conclusi-  
on

Bcr. Ep. 7.

on is drawn home to our present Case in the other words of Bernard; *Pura mala ut nunquam iuste iuberi, sic nec licite possunt fieri*; Things of themselves and materially evil, as they cannot be justly commanded, so they may not be lawfully done.

Shall we be deaf to God (as Bernard reasons) and hear Men? or with the Apostle, shall we hearken to men rather than God? We must not obey a Constable in opposition to the King; nor the King in opposition to God, the King of Kings, as well as Subjects, and the King of Subjects as well as Kings, whose Sovereign Authority both Kings and Subjects and all must



*about things Indifferent.*

121

must acknowledge, lest he vindicate it with his power.

---

## CASE II.

*What are we to do when such things are required, as, if not sinfull in themselves, yet we judge to be so?*

Resol.

**I**T is past denial, that as some things may seem lawfull to one that seem *sinfull* to another; so, some things may seem either *lawfull* when they are *sinfull*, or *sinfull* when they are *lawfull*, to persons *misinformed*.

G      There-

Therefore, where a thing *seems lawfull* to our *Rulers*, and fit to be imposed, and yet *we* judge it *sinfull*, and not to be performed, The advice I should tender in *such* a case, is,

First, Be not *over-confident* of the certainty of thine own opinion, considering others, especially men in *Authority*, that with advice and assistances, which *private* persons cannot obtain, have judged it not onely *lawfull*, but fit to be imposed and practised: and perhaps if thou hast used any due *diligence* for the discovery of the truth herein, thou hast seen *reason* to be more *favourable* in thy *censure* than formerly.

2. There-

2. Therefore, with *self-diffidence* search farther, search impartially, read on both sides; if any thing *bias* thee, let it be thy mistrust of thy *self*, thy *esteeming* of others, thy inclination to *peace*, thy love of the *Church*, thy *obedience* to superiors; ever remembering, that *ignorance* and *prejudice* make *snare*s sometimes, and *Zeal* without *Knowledge* sets the Church on fire.

3. When thou hast *thoroughly* searched, the matter must needs appear unto thee either *lawful*, or *doubtful*, or *sinful* still.

1. If *God* shall *blesse* thy endeavours with *conviction*, and bring thee to see thine own error, and the *law-*

G 2 *fulness*

*fulness* of that which before thou *condemnedst*, the ground of the doubt is removed, and consequently *Obedience* is *justly* expected from thee.

2. If thy labours for satisfaction have only brought thee into some *farther suspicion* of thy opinion, so that now it doth not seem to be *directly* sinful which is required, but of a doubtful nature, so that thou art in a doubt whether thou maist *obey* or *not*, I commend thee for thy *farther* satisfaction, to that excellent *Casnist* the Reverend Bishop of *Lincoln* his Lectures, p. 216. & 217.

He concludes, "If be-  
"cause of some *propable*  
rea-

“ reasons , appearing on  
“ both sides , the *subject*  
“ cannot easily determine  
“ with himself whether the  
“ *Law* be right or not , in-  
“ somuch that his mind is  
“ in a great *incertainty*, and  
“ knows not which way to  
“ incline ; he is bound in  
“ this case actually to *obey*  
“ it ; so that he sinneth if he  
“ obeyeth it not , and doth  
“ not sin if he obeyeth.  
For which he gives several  
Reasons.

In general , the Reason  
seems to be this ; That  
whereof a man *doubts* holds  
the *beam* , as it were, *even* ;  
there is equal weight in  
each *scale* : so we say, A  
man doubting is one in *bi-*  
*vio* , in *aquilibrium* ; but if  
the command of *Authori-*

ty be thrown into the scale, it must needs turn it, if *even* before; this may not draw me to think it *more lawful*, but yet more *necessary*; not more lawful with respect to *God*, yet more lawful with respect to *us*, and more practicable; upon that known rule, *In re dubia*, &c. In a doubtful case the *safer part* is to be chosen.

3. But if the thing required appear *sinful* to thee *still*, thou art bound by the *Law*, thou art bound to the *peace* of thine own *Conscience*, Gods Vice-gerent within thee, and thou maist not obey.

Yet it may be worth thy pains to search again; thou canst not *suffer* upon too  
*sure*

sure grounds ; and perchance, yet, thou maist be in an errour, and God may at length reveal it to thee. And that I may offer all my service, both to thy conscience and the peace of the Church, let me beseech you *thorowly to examine*, and satisfie your self in these four Cases.

1. *Wherein Real Superstition, or the shew and appearance of it lies?*

2. *Whether such things are still to be reckoned Superstitious, as have been formerly used to Superstition?*

3. *Whether the significance of things imposed render the things Superstitious or sinfull?*

G 4

4. *Whe-*

4. *Whether it be a sinfull betraying the Christian Liberty to obey the Law in things indifferent in the Worship of God?*

I know nothing that makes *impositions* of this kind seem *sinfull* to any, but it may be reduced to these *four* heads: give me but a little *liberty to speak my mind briefly* upon each of them, and I hasten to a Conclusion.

---

CASE.

---



## CASE I.

*Wherein doth Superstition  
or the appearance of it  
consist?*

Resol.

**T**His Case hath visibly  
two Branches.

1. Touching the *reality*;
2. The *appearance of Superstition*.

1. For the *reality* of *Superstition*; all *Divines* conclude, that it sticks not in the *natures* of the things *used* or *required*, but in the *persons* that *superstitiously* require or use them. *Superstition* therefore is rightly said by *Divines* to be grounded in that *false*

G 5 Do-

*Doctrine* or *superstitious* opinion that *superstitious persons* have of them.

*Polaris*, with many others of unquestionable credit in this particular, hath reduced *those* errors that constitute *circumstances* of *Worship* truly and really *superstitious*, to four heads.

1. *Meriti* : When we think God is bound to reward our inventions, and that by our purses or labours therein we purchase his favour. This is *Superstition*.

2. *Cultus Dei* : When things are required as parts, or of the essence of *Divine Worship*, or so used. This is *Superstition*.

3. *Perfectionis* : When  
we

we conceive that the true beauty and excellency of the Church, and the perfection of Christianity consisteth in things of humane invention. This is *Superstition*.

4. *Neceſſitatis* : When ſuch things are required as ſimply *neceſſary* in their nature, and ſo uſed, when they are but things *indifferent*. This is alſo *Superſtition*.

Queſt. But when may a thing be ſaid to appear *Superſtitious*, or to have the appearance of *Superſtition*; for that alſo muſt be avoided?

Anſw. We muſt diſtinguiſh : There is an evil ſurmiſe, and an evil appearance; and the *firſt* is condemned

dennd as well as the *lat-ter*. Many may judge that to be superstition that is not; their error doth not *make* it to be so indeed, or in *appearance*; for then what should escape when you have tried it by the measure of all men?

Therefore we must conclude, that a thing may appear *to me* to be superstitious, that hath not the *appearance of superstition* or evil, properly so called.

Indeed, when upon evident and undeniable grounds of *general practice*, it appears to the *sob-ber* and unbiaſſed sort of Christians, that a thing is *uſed* superstitiously, that is, as before, with a *superstitious conceit* either of *me-rit*,

rit, worship, perfection, or necessity, then no doubt there is an appearance of Superstition.

But I say, grounds of general practice; for it is not the superstitious use of some few particular private persons among us (much lesse of other Countries) that makes a thing appear superstitious; the practice must be general with us.

Or rather, would you have an undoubted Rule in this Case? Look to the Doctrine of the Church, whence the grounds of imposition and practice are drawn; if that, as I have said, be false and superstitious, and it appears that upon those false and superstitious

stitious grounds the imposition was raised, then there is an *appearance* of evil to be avoided; but if you find *otherwise*, you must *otherwise judge*.

If it should be possible that *private* Christians have reason to reply, We know not the minds of our Rulers; for ought we know they may require those things which we scruple, upon some *superstitious ground* unknown to us.

To this it is easie to answer,

1. If the *Doctrine* of the Church declares the grounds of such imposition in *general*, that is *visible*, and that must be your rule in judging the grounds of *particular* things imposed, till the

con-

contrary is declared, or till you have some unquestionable reason to suspect the designs of your *Governors* to betray the Church to *superstition* and *Idolatry*, contrary to the known *Doctrine* of it.

In the mean while, if nothing favouring of superstition aforesaid be declared in the imposition, as *Augustine* saith, *Quod neque contra fidem, &c.* That which is neither against faith or holinesse ought to be held *indifferent*; and for the *society* of those among whom we live, to be conformed unto.

Epist. ii 8.  
ad Januar.

Suppose you do not know the minds of your Rulers, yet you owe them *charity* as well as *obedience*,  
and

and *that* thinks no harm,  
but welcoms every thing,  
especially from Superiours,  
with the best *interpretation*.

Aug. l. 2.  
de Serm. in  
Mont.

“ There are (saith *Augu-*  
“ *stine*, full to our purpose )  
“ certain middle or indiffe-  
“ rent actions , which we  
“ are ignorant with what  
“ mind they are done ( be-  
“ cause they may be done  
“ either with a good or evil  
“ intent ) ; *de quibus teme-*  
*rarium est judicare, maxime*  
*ut condemnemus* ; which  
things it is a rashnesse to  
*judge* , much more to *con-*  
*demn*.

CASE



CASE II.

*Whether such things as have  
been used superstitiously  
must be reckoned Super-  
stitious still?*

Resol.

**T**His doubt is also resolved upon the former grounds. For,

1. If *Superstition* consists not in the *nature* of the thing, but in the *superstitious conceit* and *use* of it, then *superstition* cleaves no longer to any thing, when the thing is *purged* and freed from the *superstitious doctrine and use*, opinion and practice aforesaid.

2. None

2. None can reasonably doubt but that upon *this* ground *Superstition* is *separable* from a thing that hath been thus abused ; as one sayes well, *Nothing can be so far gone into the devils power, but may be reduced to Gods Glory.*

3. Therefore , as hath been said, we must still have recourse to the *reason* of the *usage* at present , and the present *grounds* of the *imposition* ; would you judge righteous in this weighty particular.

*Superstition* is reformatable *two* wayes ; either by *abolishing* the thing , or *removing* the *abuse* : Now which is the *best* and most effectual course to be taken , must be left to the  
wise-

wisdome and zeal of Governours ; yet Reason judges so far , *Frustra fit per plura, &c.* If the end can be attained without more ado , *i. e.* if by *instruction* and *injunctions* the thing may be reduced to a lawful and laudable use, what need of the abolition of it ?

*Ad eundem finem multis mediis pervenitur ;* We may arrive at the *same* end by *divers* means ; the *means* are of no moment, as such, further than they advance the *end*. If superstition be removed , no great matter *which way* , as appeareth in the practice of good *Hezekias* ; he took away the *High places* , brake the *Images*, cut down the *Groves*, brake the *Brazen Serpent* ;  
thus

thus he endeavoured with all pious zeal to reform by the first course, the abolition of the things abused; yet he spared the Chapel which Solomon built for *Ashtoreth* the Idol of the *Sydonians*, and for the *Chemosh* the Idol of the *Moa-bites*, and for *Milcom* the abomination of the children of *Ammon*<sup>3</sup>, in hopes, no doubt, to sever the *Idolatri* from the *Places*, and by a milder course of Govern-

Vid. Greg. I. 10. Ep. 71. ment, to reduce these by his wisdom to the use and service of the true God.

Yet upon supposition that the *Idolatri* or superstition cannot be severed from the use of the thing, or very hardly done, *Idolatri* and superstition must have

have no indulgence ; the  
*Serpent* it self in such a case  
must be *broken in pieces*.  
Here that famous Rule of  
Pope *Stephen* is approved  
by all ; *Per hoc , Magna*  
*Authoritas*, &c. “ For this  
“ cause that Authority is  
“ esteemed great in the  
“ Church, that if some of  
“ our Predecessors have  
“ done some things which  
“ at that time might be  
“ without fault , and after-  
“ wards are turned into  
“ errour and superstition ,  
“ without any delay , and  
“ with great authority, they  
“ may be destroyed by Po-  
“ sterity.

Yet to this rule we must  
oppose that excellent obser- *Ad Publi-*  
vation of Saint *Augustine*, col. 154.  
*Cum Tempia, Idola, Luci,*  
    &c.

&c. "When Temples, I-  
 "dols, Groves, or any  
 "thing of like quality, by  
 "lawful Authority are rui-  
 "nated, if they be trans-  
 "lated into *common* (not  
 "proper) uses, and conver-  
 "ted to the *honour* of the  
 "true *God*, that falleth out  
 "in them which happeneth  
 "also in men, when as of  
 "sacrilegious and ungod-  
 "ly, they are converted to  
 "the true Religion. --- So  
 "God (saith he) comman-  
 "ded, that the *Wood* which  
 "grew in the Groves of  
 "strange gods should be u-  
 "sed in the *Holocaust*; and  
 "that all the *gold and sil-*  
 "ver of *Jericho* should be  
 "brought into the *Lords*  
 "*Treasury*.

De  
 Vest. ad  
 Nop.

Because (as the Learned  
*Bucer*

“Bucer teacheth) to be a  
“legal or *Antichristian*  
“Rite, sticks in no creature  
“of God, in no Gar-  
“ment, in no Figure, in no  
“colour, or in any work  
“of God, but in the *mind*  
“and profession of those  
“that abuse the good Crea-  
“tures of God, *ad impias*  
“*significationes*, to wicked  
“or ungodly purposes.

Hereupon, Scio (inquit  
*Beza*) nonnullos sublata  
*crucis Adoratione*, aliquem  
*signi crucis usum retinuisse*;  
*ut antur igitur ipsi, sicut par*  
*est, suâ libertate.*

But lastly, Admit that  
our Rulers ought to *abolish*  
the thing that hath been so  
used to *superstition*, but do  
not think fit to do it; and *in-*  
*joyn* us by their commands  
to

to leave the superstitious use, and to use it as we *lawfully* may; it need not enter into a Question, Whether we ought not to forsake the *superstition*, and also to obey Authority in the lawfull use of that thing without fear of superstition.

---

### CASE III.

*Whether the imputing of significancy to things imposed render them Superstitious?*

Resol.

**T**Ruly some Reverend and Learned men seem so affrighted at the very



very mention of *sacred mystical Ceremonies, significant symbolical Rites* of humane Institution, that I cannot but fear, that they have apprehended some very great danger in them.

Should we once grant, that Ceremonies of humane Institution might be appointed to signify *the favour of God*, or the *grace of the Sacraments*; or to be a *means* of receiving any blessing from God; no doubt, there is so much *danger* in it, that if corrupt and superstitious men should at any time rule the Church, we may quickly have not onely *Seven* but *Seventy times seven*, if not *intire*, yet, *Semi-Sacraments*; the Church and service of God  
H being

being thereby obnoxious to all the antick and conceited crotchets that the vain imaginations of over-curious men can cumber them with, untill they become stench in the nostrils of all *sober* and *staid men*, and of *God* himself, with the Church of *Rome*.

But, if by *Rites* and *Ceremonies* we mean onely the *Circumstances* of *Divine Worship*, by *Scripture* left to the *liberty* and *prudence* of the Church; and by the *significancy* of them, we intend nothing, but that they are fitted to commend the *exercise*, with *order* and *decency*, to expresse the *gravity* and *devotion* of the *Worshippers*; tending also (as such things are

*about things Indifferent.*

147

are capable ) to unity and  
*edification* : if this be all,  
truly I cannot discover *so*  
*much* danger.

Yea, give me leave to  
add, that to quarrel with  
them, because they are  
*such*, seems to be angry  
with *these* Ceremonies  
which are *better*, and be-  
*cause* they are better than  
others ; and to quarrel  
with their *very fitnessse*, and  
their conformity to the ge-  
neral *Rules of Scripture*, by  
which alone they ought to  
be measured.

Again, if nothing that  
is so *purely Indifferent*, as  
to be of *no use* or service ;  
and not to be more expe-  
dient than inexpedient,  
ought to be imposed, as all  
moderate men allow ; and,

H 2 ac-

according to the opinion in hand, Nothing that hath *its use* or significancy may be required: who sees not but the Church is *crucified* between *two Opinions*, that openly rob her of *all power* about things indifferent?

Some very wise and unsuspected persons have freely declared themselves not to discover any *such danger* in the *bare significancy* of the Rites of the Church, as others are affrighted with. "It is not  
"lawfull (saith *Peter Mar-*  
"tyr to *Hooper*) to deprive  
"the Church of that *liber-*  
"ty, that she should not  
"by her actions and *Rites*  
"of the Church, *aliquid*  
"significare, signifie some-  
"thing. Yea, (further saith  
he)

he) the very *Apostle* himself used *that* liberty, when he taught, *ut illis signis*, that with those signs they should be admonished of their duty. Again, *Rerum significationes*, &c. the significations of things call to our mind, *quid nos deceat*, what is expedient. *Ministri magis memores sint sui officii*. [Vid. *Aret.* in *I Cor.* 10. 10. & 16. 16. *Pet. Mart.* in *I Cor.* 16. 26. *Geneva Annotations* in *I Cor.* 16. 20. *Perkins Case. Consci.* cap. 3. Sect. 3.]

Calvin also is nothing fearful to deliver his mind in the point: There are (saith he) *Rites which draw Veneration to holy things*, &c. with such little helps we are provoked to piety.-----

H 3      They

They are *adapted* to the reverence of holy Mysteries; thereby the exercise is *sui-  
ted* to holinesse. ----- They are not *without* fruit. --- Thereby the faithfull are *admonished* with what modesty and religion they are to worship God.

ep. 20. *Kneeling* (saith Beza) *when we receive the Signs, hath a shew of Godly and Christian Veneration.*

---

CASE

---

---

CASE I V.

*Whether it be a sinfull betraying our Christian liberty to obey the Law in things Indifferent in the Worship of God?*

Resol.

**T**His Question seems to engage *God* and *Cesar* ; and to cause a quarrel betwixt *Duty* and *Liberty*, which neither *God* or *Cesar* , *Duty* or *Liberty* will own or defend.

The doubt apparently results out of a too grosse mistake of the nature of true *Gospel-Liberty* ; the Internal part whereof,  
H 4                      though

though it indeed free us from *Inward Bondage*, yet binds us the faster in Service to God : so the external part thereof doth also deliver us from outward slavery to the lusts of men; yet it the more obligeth us in duty to Superiours.

*Polanus* placeth External Christian Liberty ( which indeed is properly *Christian*, as it may be distinguished from *Gospel-Liberty* ) in two things. A Liberty from the *Law of Moses*; 2. A Liberty in the use of *Indifferent* things. Now, though the first branch may not be touched, yet, he doubts not in the least, but that the latter may be determined, upon just occasion of the Churches



ches order, by lawful Authority.

*Libertas Christiana est duplex; à Legibus Moſis, & in Adiaphoris, quales ſunt Ceremoniæ humanâ auctoritate inſtitutæ, boni ordinis cauſâ.* Chriſtian liberty (ſaith *Polanus*) is two-fold; from the Laws of *Moſes*, and in things indifferent: of which ſort (meaning things Indifferent) are Ceremonies appointed by humane Authority for orders ſake.

Now neither of theſe branches of Chriſtian Liberty can be ſoberly thought to make void the Law, as Moral or Natural, in any one jot or tittle of it, which our Saviour came to fulfill, *Matth. 5.* and

H 5 eſta-

establiſh, *Rom. 3. ult.* but to aſſert, that *Rulers* have no power in things *Indifferent*, becauſe of *Chriſtian liberty*, ſeems to weaken the arm of Authority Eccleſiaſtical, Civil, Political, Oeconomical, and even to raze out the *ſiſth Commandment* of the Moral Law; yea, what *unnatural* conſequences of all diſorder are like to enſue, in *Church*, in *State*, in *Families*, and all *Societies* in the World? the beauty and comlineſſe of all which lies not a little in the due order of things Indifferent.

Yea, how often is the *Apoſtle* himſelf, the great Aſſertor of *Chriſtian Liberty*, thus made an *Inva-der* of it? how Injuriouſly

ly did that famous *Synod*,  
*Act. 15.* bind the Church  
 to those indifferent things?  
 VVhat *Council*, *Father*,  
*Schoolman*, *Church*, nay,  
 what *wise man* was ever of  
 this opinion? or who is that  
*solid Writer*, in any age al-  
 most, that hath not declared  
 the *contrary*?

Give me leave, there-  
 fore, to repeat it, the na-  
 ture of *Christian Liberty*  
 is much mistaken: It is  
 not onely *consistent* with,  
 but it even *consisteth* in the  
 determination of things in-  
 different by lawfull Autho-  
 rity. It is *one part* of this  
 liberty (as *Calvin* asserts) *Libertas*  
 that the Church hath power *aufertur, ?*  
 to regulate the *Circum-* *ablato Ju-*  
*stances* of Worship, for *re & Le-*  
*gibus.*  
 peace and unity, order and  
 decen-

decency ; and it is , no doubt, another great part of the said Liberty , that the members of the same may, without sin , *obey* their *Rulers* in such determinations.

i Cor. 7.  
20, 22.

It is most worthily observed by the *Apostle* , that is a part of our *Freedom*, as Christians, that we may be the *Lords free men* in our *publick* capacity , and yet *servants* in our *private* ; our Christian liberty being not infringed by our outward duty.

Moreover , that for the good of *Society* , the *preservation* of our selves from *legal penalties* , for our *maintenance* and livelihood , we may be subject to the commands and laws of men , I take to be a very

very valuable part of our liberty also; provided nothing be required or acted against the *Supremacy* of our Lord *Paramount* in heaven.

But let us a little more <sup>1 Cor. 7.</sup> distinctly consider the A- <sup>20, 21, 23.</sup> postle, *Let every one abide in the same calling (private) wherein he is called; that is, to be a Christian: Art thou called a servant, &c.* Whence briefly note,

1. Are not all that are called to be Christians, called to the *liberty* of Christians?

2. Doth not the *Text* assure us, that *this* liberty to *which* we are called is truly consistent with the *Condition* in *which* we are called? otherwise why should

Should we *abide* in it?

3. Is not the state of all persons, *called* to the Christians, (except *supreme* Magistrates) a state of *subjection* and servitude?

4. Doth it not then most clearly follow, that Christian liberty *consisteth* with, and *obligeth* unto, all kind of duty to all kind of Governours, to *Fathers*, *Masters*, *Husbands*, (as the very *Quakers* acknowledge) *Pastors*, *Kings*, and to God himself (as all good Christians have cause to glory) and that upon the firmest bonds and ties imaginable, of *Wrath*, of *Conscience*, and the *Lords sake*?

*Nam etsi conscientias  
proprie solus Deus ligat,  
&c.*

“For

“ For (saith Beza) al-  
 “ though God alone can Bez.ep.20.  
 “ properly bind the consci-  
 “ ence ; yet so far as the  
 “ Church, with respect to  
 “ Order and Decency, and  
 “ thereby to Edification,  
 “ doth rightly enjoyn , or  
 “ make Laws concerning  
 “ things Indifferent , those  
 “ same Laws are to be ob-  
 “ served by all pious Per-  
 “ sons ; and they do so far  
 “ bind the conscience as that  
 “ no man [ *Sciens & pru-*  
 “ *dens & rebellardi animo* ]  
 “ wittingly and willingly  
 “ with a purpose to disobey,  
 “ can either do what is so  
 “ forbidden, or omit what is  
 “ so commended , *absque*  
 “ *peccato*, without sin.

CASE

## CASE III.

*What are we to do in case such things are commanded us, as though we judge them lawful, yet others judge them sinful, and will be offended at our doing of them?*

Resol.

**W**E have already considered what is to be done, if things *sinful in themselves*, or judged so *by us*, be enjoined: We are arrived to the *ultimate* scruple, touching the *offence* that *others* may be likely to take at our practice, who conceive those things which are *enjoined* to



to be *unlawfull* , and that we shall *sin* if we do them. And the Question is, *What is to be done in this Case?*

The scruple is evidently grounded in the *Apostles* Directions about *scandal*; the sum of which is , that we must not use our liberty in indifferent things to the *offence of our weak* brother.

For *satisfaction* to this great and present doubt, we must have *liberty* a little to *distinguish*.

1. We must distinguish of the *object* of *scandal*; it may be such as offends onely *one way*; and it may be such as offends both *wayes*; that is, first the doing of a thing may offend some, when the *not doing* of

of it offends none : This was the Case in the *Apostles* time ; the taking of *meat* offered to *Idols* was apt to offend the *weak* brethren ; but the *not eating* of such meat was not likely to offend any body : In such a Case 'tis evident, we ought not to eat to the offence of our brother.

But in *some Cases* there is a *necessity of offence*, whether we *do* the thing, or whether we do it not ; as in case of *Conformity*, our very case ; some, you say, that are weak will be offended if we *do* conform ; and you cannot say but that *some* whom you judge *weak* also, will be offended if we *do not*.

Now in this case there  
is

is no remedy, seeing I must do one or other, *conform*, or *not*, but to fly to that excellent Rule of *Polanus*, and to consider the *persons offended* on both sides, and to weigh the *nature* of the offence.

Hereupon we must rest satisfied in *this* issue; where *most*, and of *most consideration* are offended; and where the nature of the offence is *most hainous*, there we must forbear to use our liberty, and either do or not do the thing in question; and so on the contrary.

Let us then apply, and faithfully answer our selves whether the doing a lawful thing enjoined by Authority, that will offend our  
weak

weak brethren be likely to offend *more persons* and persons of *more consideration*, and give offence of a *more heinous* nature, than the *not doing* of that lawful thing against the command of Authority.

Here seem to be three branches of the Comparison : 1. Where *more* are likely to be offended. 2. Where *more considerable* persons. 3. Where the nature of the *offence* is *foulest*.

Truly , I soberly think, that *Conformity* in such lawfull things need not fear to compare with *Non-conformity* , in any one of these *three*.

1. If the Question be,  
Whether *Conformity* or  
Non-

*about things Indifferent.*

165

Non conformity be likely to offend *most* individual persons in the Nation, it will not be difficult to answer, Its possible, the *imposing* of such things may offend many *more* than the *not practising*; but when things are once *imposed*, so *wise a Nation* will, I conceive, leave little room for the comparison betwixt the *extent* of scandal by *Obedience* and by *Disobedience*.

2. And much more, if the Question be touching the *considerableness* of the persons offended on *both sides*. 'Tis too true, that *Obedience* in such a case is likely to stir up *trouble*, *envy*, *discontent* and *murmuring* in the minds of many of the *ordinary*

ordinary sort of people ; but whether, as to the great ends of the *peace* and good of the *Church*, the ordinary sort be the more *considerable* , will hardly brook an inquiry. Whereas, our *Disobedience* , besides the offence of *ordinary* people , is too likely to offend the *King* , the *Court*, the *Councill* , the *Parliament*, the *Bishops*, the *Lawyers*, the *Nobility* , the *Gentry*, or beyond controversie the *greater part* of them all ; but even thus farr the Argument is invincible ( *a Minore ad Majus* ) : If we must forbear our liberty in case of offence to our *weak brother* , much more in case of offence to *Authority*.

3. Espe-

3. Especially, if we consider the *nature* of the offence also on both sides. Where, first, we may compare the offence on *both sides* with the offence the *Apostle* mentions, and then weigh them *one* against *another*.

1. First, comparing the scandal likely to happen upon our *obedience*, with the scandal of the *weak* mentioned by the *Apostle*, there seems to be this great *difference*: the scandal mentioned by the *Apostle*, was, chiefly, if not (as an *eminent* person asserts) *only, unto sin*. And the great reason the *Apostle* gives, why we must not use our *liberty* to the offence of our *weak* brother, is, lest we

Rom. 14. we lay a *stumbling-block*  
 13, 15, 20, before him, whereat he may  
 21. fall: that is, lest he pre-  
 1 Cor. 8 9, sume after our *example*, to  
 10, 11, 12, do something against his  
 13.

Conscience, and so sin a-  
 gainst Christ, and be likely  
 to *perish* or to be *destroyed*;  
 the *danger*, therefore the  
*Apostle* tells us, lies not so  
 much in *offending* our bro-  
 ther in the *English* sense, as  
 in one *making* him by our  
 evil example to *offend*.  
 Wherefore, the *Apostle*  
 concludes, *If meat make*  
*my brother to offend, I will*  
*eat no flesh, &c.* 1 Cor.  
 8. 13.

But now the *offence* that  
 is most likely to ensue up-  
 on our *conformity*, is quite  
 of *another* nature, there is  
 little fear of drawing our  
*offen-*



offended brethren to like the wayes of Conformity by the practice of Conformists; but rather they will like Conformity and the persons conforming so much the worse, and grow the more bitter against them.

The reason of this difference, I conceive, lies thus; In the time of the *Apostle*, those were generally looked upon as the *strongest* Disciples that *knew* their liberty best; and the others, that were *weak*, were aptest to be offended; but now, those that pretend offence are the *strongest* in their own opinion, and they judge it a *weaknesse* in those that do conform: and no doubt, if any be likely

I

to

to follow our *examples* in conformity, out of an opinion of our *ability* to judge better than *themselves*; they will as easily follow our *Judgement* too, if we first use due means of *satisfaction* to them; and then all the *scruple* is vanished and gone.

2. Secondly, let us weigh them *one* against *another*; and compare the *offence* received by our *weak* brethren upon our *obedience*, with that received by *Authority*, upon our *disobedience*.

If we onely do that which we may lawfully do, and which we are *commanded* to do, we do not *give* our *weak* brother any offence, though he *take* it: there

there is not that *per se*, or naturally flowing out of the use of my *liberty*, or the doing of my *duty*, that would hurt my brother, or tempt him to *sin*; he takes occasion of himself, not at all given by me.

But now, by *disobedience*, (if the thing be *lawful* that is enjoined) we give offence to Authority, *directly* and properly so; and, as we have shewed, we can hardly escape *sin* herein against the *fifth Commandment*; which, in ever *iota*, as well as all the rest, our very liberty it self establisheth.

The *sum* is this; by refusing to conform in such a *lawful* case, lest we should offend our weak

I 2      bro-

brother, seems *directly* to *sin* our selves, to avoid an *occasion* of *sin* to him; to offend *God*, the *King*, the *Law*, the *Church*, and *conscience* too, by *not doing* our duty, lest we should offend our brother by *doing* it.

Therefore, we must distinguish betwixt things *Indifferent*, that are *not* under the actual *command* of *Authority*; and such as are; before they are *commanded*, things *Indifferent*, are in our *liberty*, and then, the *Apostles* Rule holds, we must *not use* our *liberty* to the *offence* of our brethren; but what is required by *Authority*, if it be no longer in our *liberty*, we must mind our *duty*.

*This* Rule therefore greatly

greatly concerns *Magistrates* in their *Impositions*, who ought still to follow the weighty advice of *Mr. Calvin* : Let *Charity* submit to *Faith*, and *Liberty* to *Charity* ; but *Subjects* must not *sin*, that they may please their *Prince* , much lesse their *brother*.

Besides , we may distinguish of *offence* , with respect to our *brother offended* ; if we offend him by *doing our duty* , we only tempt him to do *his duty*, though against his *conscience* ; on the other side , if we *omit our duty* , lest we offend our *brother* , do not we offend him *more* in the *Apstles* sence, by tempting him to *continue in sin*, and

to embolden himself in sin  
with a worse conscience?

---

### CASE.

*The Apostle hath laid down  
a Rule, how we are to use  
our liberty in things In-  
different, towards our  
weak brother: can Man  
by his commands alter  
this Rule, or take off the  
force of it?*

### Resol.

**T**He Apostles Rule is ab-  
solutely unalterable,  
where the *reason* of it holds;  
and the *object* is the same  
that is where the matter is  
*still indifferent.*

2. Man

2. Man cannot make things *Indifferent* to become *necessary* in their *nature*; yet lawfull Authority may and ought to judge when the *exigencies* of the Church make any thing necessary, as to its *present use*, or forbearance. *These necessary things* (saith that Council, Act. 15.) though they were not *all* necessary in their *nature*, yet the Council judged them necessary as to the *present good* of the Church. vers. 28.

3. In such Cases, for the publick good of the Church, *Governours* may and ought to determine the use of *Indifferent* things by their prudent impositions: *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us* vers. 28.

to lay upon you no other burthen than these necessary things.

And no lesse remarkably we find *S<sup>t</sup>. Pauls* power put forth, in *1 Cor. 11.* and other places, in determining many *Indifferent* things, for order and decency in the Church of God.

4. But what doth all this signify, if these *Apostolical* Injunctions have no force, when a *discontented* person shall say he is *offended*?

Put case that after the decree of the Synod in *Act. 15.* a particular member should have been *offended*, that his brother refused to eat meat offered to *Idols*, pleading that it was *superstition* in him,



him , or a losing or betraying the *Christian Liberty* : Or that others had been offended at those particulars of *Decency* and *Order* injoynd by the *Apostle* to the Church of *Corinth* ; urging that they were not commanded of the *Lord*, that therefore they were *Humane Inventions*, *New Ordinances*, *Additions* to Gods Word, and *Will-worship*. Can any imagine , that the rest of the people had been discharged of their duty, either to that famous *Synod* , or that excellent Governour the *Apostle Paul* , or that they were bound to suspend their

I 5      *Obedi-*

*Obedience*, lest they should offend such scrupulous persons? I cannot think it.

We must not oppose *Liberty* to *Necessity*; *Charity* to *Duty*; or the *Offence* of the *Weak*, to the *Higher Powers*.

---

CASE I.

---

CASE I.

But it is vehemently urged  
by my brethren in the Mi-  
nistry ; that even their  
credit and reputation will  
not suffer them to con-  
form ; they shall thus be-  
come vile to the people,  
as men that will do any  
thing to save their Li-  
vings ; and then their Mi-  
nistry will be fruitless,  
and do no good among  
them ; What is to be done  
in such a Case ?

Resol.

I. **T**HIS Case seems  
to arise from pru-  
dence and not conscience :  
Herein we not pretend to  
fly

fly from *sin* to *suffering*, but from *one sort* of suffering to *another*, that is judged rather to be chosen ; from suffering in our *Reputation* by *Conformity*, to the *Penalties* of the Law for *disobedience* ; which, when all things are considered, will be found to favour more of the stoutnesse and *Magnanimity* of an *Heathen*, than of the *meeknesse*, humility, and self-denial of a *Christian*, or a *Minister* of *Christ*.

2. A *good name* indeed is a very pretious thing ; and to *blot* and *stain* it with any thing that is *sinfull* is to be *abhorred* more than *death* ; for a *good name* is *better than life* ; but to suffer therein *without a cause*, or  
in

in a good cause ; to suffer therein for *well doing*, as the *Apostle* speaks, the more precious it is, the more *thank-worthy* are such sufferings, and the more like *Martyrdom*.

3. But if the *things* be lawful that are required, and the Authority be lawfull that requires them, and God commandeth you to *obey them that rule over you*, in things that are lawfull ; if the publique *Peace*, the good of *Souls*, the safety of the *Church*, as well as your own *prosperity*, do truly depend upon your *conformity* ; and upon these, or like respects of *Peace*, *Duty*, and *safety*, you do conform, and are therefore *reproached* and wounded in  
your

your *Names*, I see not but that you suffer in a very good cause, and your *Names* are *Martyrs* of the *Church of God*, and the *Souls* of the people; in such a case doubt not to commit your *Souls* and *Names* into the hands of your *God* in well-doing, as into the hands of a faithfull *Creator*, who will find a time and a way to wipe off the dirt from his *Jewels*, and make your *Righteousnesse* shine as the light, and your *innocency* as the noon-day: When all men speak evil of you (such a time there may be) for *Christs* sake, rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in *heaven*.

4. But let us take a more

more steady view of the danger which your reputation is really in, by conformity in lawful things. In order thereunto let us weigh the state and temper of the people with whom you credit and reputation lieth, and whom you fear; they are usually divided into three sorts, two extremes, and a middle more staid and sober sort of people; the two extremes are the profane and the giddy, i. e. such as are zealous, but without knowledge.

5. Now let it be seriously reckoned what our reputation with these two extremes is worth, further than it may help us to save their souls. Again, How difficult and almost im-

impossible it is to have and keep a *good Name* , and a *good Conscience*, with either of these : If we be *faithful* to their *souls* in reproof of sin , and pressing the *power* of godliness, will not the *profane* hate us and *speak evil of us* ? And let one put it home to you , What considerable part of Reputation have you *left* ( if you have indeed been thus faithfull ) with them , to hazard or lose by your *conformity* ? Yea, Whether you are not more certain to contract the *reproach* and reviling of such persons by your *Non-conformity* ? and whether your *Conformity* may not afford you more *opportunity* . ( by being a means of your continuing in



in your places) and also more *advantage* (bringing your *practice nearer* to their *principles* and desires) of *winning*, reforming, and saving the *Souls* of the prophaner sort of your people, than your *Non-conformity*, throwing you out of the *Ministry*, and farther from the way and *affections* of those people, is likely to do?

6. As for the *zealous* part, I mean such whose *knowledge* is but *small*, and their *zeal much*; I confesse your *interest* in them is deservedly prized, because they *mean well*, and in the main are many of them *truely pious*; yet I judge it very unreasonable to prize your *interest* in their favour  
and

and affection above the interest of their *Souls*, the interest of the *Gospel*, and of *God* himself; which is to set their good *opinion* of us (falsly taken too) above our *Ministry* and the *publick Peace*, above our *duty* to God and man. It is possible we may suffer from *good people*, not onely for *well doing*, but for *doing*, or endeavouring to do them *good*; and a *Peter* through ignorance may act *Satans* part, towards *Christ* himself; but our *Saviour* hath encouraged us\* with his own example, to sacrifice not onely our *Names*, but our *Lives*, to *save*, if possible, the *very persons* that would take them from us.

7. Be-

7. Besides, when the *Law* for Conformity extends to the *People*, as well as to the *Ministry*, perhaps, by their own *necessity*, they may learn more modesty and *charity* towards us.

And in the mean while these censurers are far more obnoxious to the *censure* and reproof of their *Ministers*, and all sober people, for their rashness and uncharitableness, than their *Ministers* can so much as seem to be, by doing their *duty* in a just *Conformity*: and, if meerly to gratify them, we suspend obedience to our superiors, we seem to sacrifice *Church*, and *State*, our *selves*, and *all*, as far as in us lies, to the very *humours* of our people.

8. Our

8. Our own *experience* (many of us I am sure) hath sufficiently *reproached* us already, for our being so much *lead* by the *foolish fire* of the strange *zeal* of such kind of people; we have seen that there is no *measure* in their principles, no *bounds* in their practices, and many of us have once already, by making them our *guides*, lost our *wayes*, our *selves*, and our *credits*, and *reputation*, as well with *our selves*, as with all *sober* and well *tempered* persons; and shall we now take *sanctuary* there to *save* our *credits*, where our reputation hath *bled*, and our *Names* have suffered even to death already? Is not the good of the *Church*,

Church, the service of Souls, the protection of the Laws, and just obedience to God and the King, a better refuge, and of better reputation, than the opinion of a few inconsiderable censorious persons? Let it be wisely considered.

9. Let us ponder a little the sentence of Calvin, passed long ago upon such kind of people, the truth of which much late experience hath sealed unto: *Cum sub specie studii perfectionis imperfectionem nullam tolerare possumus, aut in corpore, aut in membris Ecclesiae, tunc Diabolus nos Tumefacere Superbia, & Hypocrisis seducere moneamur*; in which words he plainly fathers such blind, rash,

Calv. Ad-  
vers. Ana-  
bapt. Art.  
2.

rash , and censorious zeal upon the *Devil* , and upon the *works* of the *Devil*, *Seduction*, *Pride* , and *Hypocrisie*.

10. Now if we do indeed so highly value the *love* of such people , have we not reason to answer their *Love* ? And how can this be better effected than by endeavouring to recover them out of the *snare of the Devil*, both by *Doctrine* or good *example* ; I mean the rather for *their* *sakes*, to yield obedience to those things that *our people* ought to know we judge to be *lawful* ; and that they may also be truly satisfied *how ready* we are to do any thing that is not *sinful*, rather than to lay down the

*Mi-*

*Ministry* and service of their *Souls* ; a far better way, I think, to expresse our hearty affection to them, than by indulging their *prejudices*, gratifying their *vices*, or out of a senselesse *tendernesse* of our *interest* in them, to suffer our selves by the power of the *Tempter* to be *seduced* with them into a state of *wretched separation*.

● If *all* that hath been said cannot *satisfie*, let it also be seriously considered, how often our *Saviour* hazarded his *Name* with the *People*, that he might *fulfill* his *Ministry*, untill he had gotten the *flander* of a *friend of Publicans and sinners* ; that his Apostle *Peter* ventured his *credit* even with

with the Church', the *parent* of the Church, that he might answer his *call* from Heaven, and dispense the Gospel to his *new charge* the Gentiles : And lastly, How doth *Paul* also run the venture of a *scandalous reputation*, of *time*, and *company-serving*, of *men-pleasing*, &c. When to the Jew he becomes a Jew, and to those *without Law*, as if *without Law* ; even *all things* (lawfull) to *all men* ; which yet he sticks not at, as himself glories, for the *Gospels sake*, and that he might obtain opportunity and advantage to win *Souls*.

11. But besides these *two extremes*, ther's a *midle* sort of people, that are *fixed* upon



upon sober and *staid* Principles of a better reputation by far than *either* or *both* of the former; indeed if our *Conformity* should forfeit our *credit* with *these*, I should much suspect it.

12. But here you must not understand by this *sober* sort of people, only the *sober* people of your *own Parishes*, that is too narrow and short a *measure* of them; but the *sober* and moderate part of the *Kingdome*, as you may find them in all *ranks* and *qualities*, *degrees* and *callings* of men, as hath been before more largely observed.

13. Now, I think, I may say with *confidence*, that  
K *these*

these you will find either professedly for Conformity themselves, or else so wise, so just, and *charitable* to you, as (unlesse you have formerly forfeited your credit and reputation with them, by some notorious appearances of your time-serving) to put a better interpretation upon your humble and peaceable submission to Authority, then you seem to hope for.

14. Yea, though your name and esteem should seem to be consumed in the zeal and rage of the giddy and profane sort of the people (with whom it cannot long live) yet despair not, but by your wise and sober conversations, your diligence and labours in the ser-

service of the *Gospel*, your peaceable demeanour in obedience to the *Laws*, there will arise, as it were, out of the ashes of the old, a *New Name*, and better reputation to you, in the good opinion of this better generation, the wise and sober sort of the people.

15. However cast the worst; thou hast thus sacrificed thy *Name* for the discharge of thy duty to God and the King, to the Church and thy Charge, and no doubt to thine own conscience, if this be all thy scruple; for I cannot believe that he that so much values the good opinion of the vulgar, can ever have a good opinion of himself; or he that dare hazard the

K. 2.

peace

peace of the Church for his credit with the people, can have much quiet in his own breast; or one that hath more confidence in the esteem of the multitude than in the favour of his Prince, or the protection of the Laws, can easily satisfy his own conscience.

16.  
Confes.  
Suev. c.  
14.

For I must needs confess with that famous Church, *Civilibus legibus, quæ cum pietate non pugnant eo quisque Christianus paret promptius, quo fide Christi est imbutus plenius*; That every Christian, by how much the more he favours of the faith of Christ, by so much the more prompt and ready he is to conform to the Laws of men, which are not contrary to the Laws of God.

FINIS.

---

# The Table.

---

I. **W**HAT are  
things In-  
different? page 1.

II. Whether is any  
thing Indifferent in the  
exercise of Religion?  
p. 3.

III. Whether may  
things Indifferent be im-  
posed? 8.

IV. Whether may  
they conduce to order in  
Gods worship? 13.

V. What are those  
things Indifferent that  
may be imposed? 16.

VI. Whe-

## The Table.

VI. *whether may things Indifferent be imposed quatenus such?*

pag. 25

VII. *what doth render things indifferent fit to be imposed?*

30

VIII. *what are those General Rules of Scripture that limit the imposition of things indifferent?*

32

IX. *How are private persons to demean themselves under such impositions of things indifferent in the worship of God?*

51

X. *what are we to do, when things in themselves*

## The Table.

elves 'necessary are re-  
quired by Authority?

pag. 55

XI. *what are we to do,  
when things expedient  
are required?*

61

XII. *what, when  
things purely Indiffe-  
rent?*

65

XIII. *what, when  
things inexpedient?*

72

*where it is enqui-  
red,*

1. *whether a thing  
that we judge inexe-  
dient may be done in o-  
bedience to Authority?*

81

2. *whether it may  
not*

## The Table.

not be expedient, as well  
as lawfull, sometimes to  
obey in things lawfull  
but inexpedient? p.85

3. Whether the con-  
sideration of Peace,  
Duty, and Safety, may  
not render such Obedi-  
ence both lawfull and  
expedient? 91,

99, 104

XIV. What are  
we to do, when things  
sinfull are imposed?

116

Where enquire,

I. When things ma-  
terially and really sin-  
full? 119

I.I. What are we to  
do,



## The Table.

*do, when things are required which we judge sinful?* pag. 121

*where enquire,*

I. *wherein the reality and appearance of Superstition consists?*

129

II. *whether things formerly used with superstition, are to be accounted superstitious still?*

137

III. *whether the significance of things imposed render them superstitious?*

144

IV. *whether to obey the Laws of men in things Indifferent, be to betray*

## The Table.

betray our Christian Liberty? p. 151.

III. What we are to do, when we conceive the thing required to be lawfull, but others judge it to be sinfull, and will be offended at our obedience? 160

IV. Whether a humane Law can take off the Force of the Scripture-Rule, not to use our Liberty to the offence of the weak? 174

---

FINIS.

2 parts